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THE HEAVEN
AT WORK

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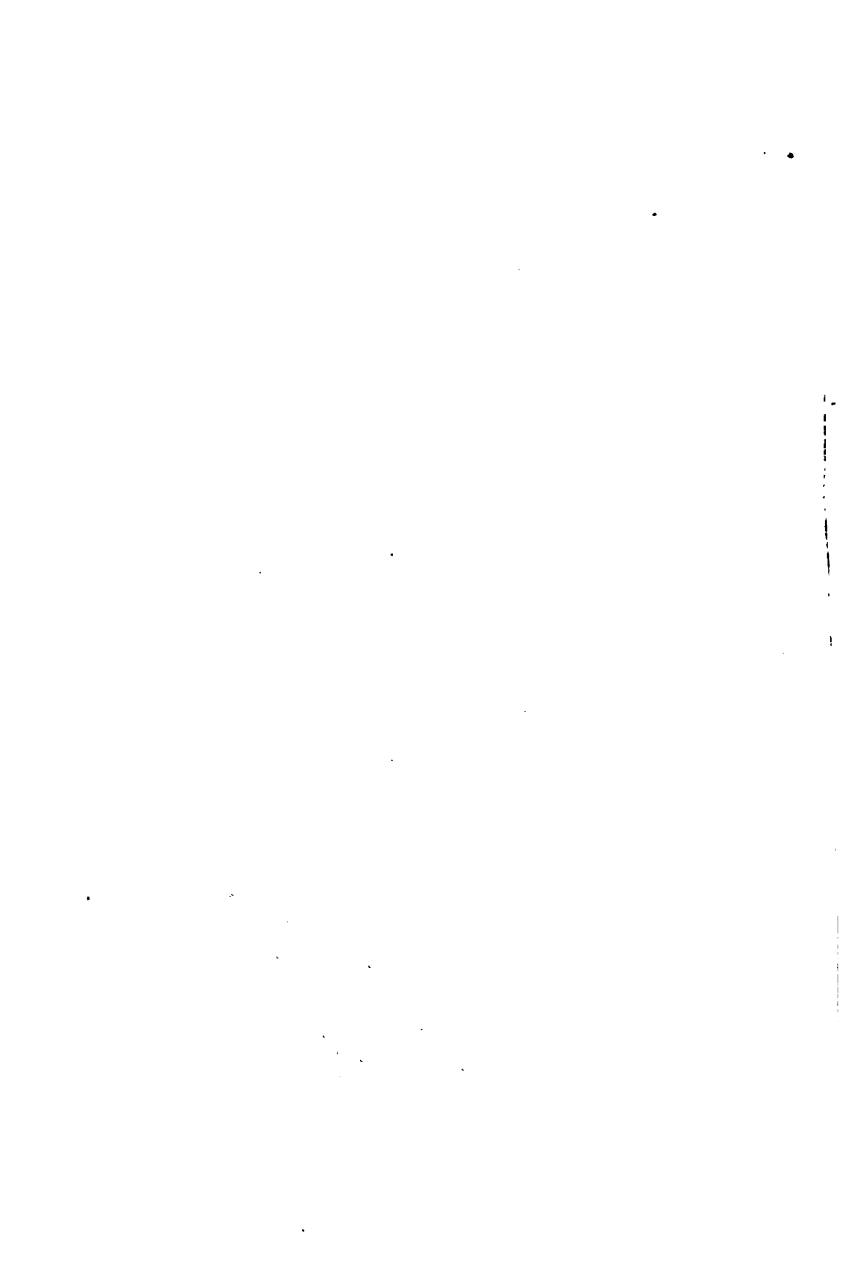
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THE LEAVEN AT WORK;

OR,

SOME OF THE CONCESSIONS OF ORTHODOXY

IN THE DIRECTION OF

UNIVERSALISM.

The kingdom of heaven resembles leaven that a woman took and concealed in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened.

JESUS THE CHRIST.

BY

J. W. HANSON, D.D.

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I'm apt to think the man
That could surround the sum of things, and spy
The heart of God and secrets of His empire,
Would speak but love; with him the bright result
Would change the hue of intermediate scenes,
And make one thing of all theology.

GAMBOLD.



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INTRODUCTORY.

THIS volume contains material illustrative of the reformation — revolution rather — that the now departing century has experienced and is experiencing in religious thought and opinion relative to human destiny. The Reformation of Luther left untouched the fundamental errors of the mediæval creeds, but it opened the flood-gates of light, and prepared the minds of men for the reformation *of* the Reformation, for the perception and reception of forgotten truths. Those truths are contained in germ in an accurate view of the Divine character, which necessitates the essentials of a genuine Christianity.

When the first promulgators of Universalism as a distinct system, in its modern re-discovery, had reached the correct view of God as a Father, and discarded the idea then prevalent that he is a mere governor and executioner, they not only gave the world the germ of a new theodicy, but they deposited in the heart of Christendom an influence destined to give a new direction to all the currents of its life, a divine leaven whose fermentation was to transform, reform the beliefs of the Christian world. Already the most marvellous improvement has taken place.

“The handful of corn on the top of the mountain is shaking like Lebanon.”

It would be claiming too much to say that the wonderful changes which have occurred are entirely due to the influence of Universalism. Other forces have been its allies and confederates. But it is true that much, if not most of the improvement originated in our faith, and it is as true that no other doctrine, no other equal number of religious reformers, ever produced so great a change in public opinion, ever accomplished so vast a reformation in religious thought in the same time, as has been produced by the Universalist Church in a single hundred years. And all the indications declare that what has been wrought is an infallible index pointing to the completion of the work, which can only come when the Christian Church shall everywhere be based on the essential doctrines announced by Murray and Ballou.

The differences between the old creeds and their ancient interpretations contained in the first part of this volume, and the many later expressions herein, quoted from their successors in the same sects, exhibit something of the progress that has taken place. No attempt has been made to philosophize or elaborate. In fact, the author has sought to give as little of his own composition as possible, aiming rather to so present the words of others as to illustrate his theme in easy and popular form; and he is confident

that the many quotations given indicate the tendencies of the times, and represent the condition of every intelligent community in the English-speaking world. For nothing can be more apparent to the observing eye than that the leaven of the gospel of universal grace is at work changing the old forms of theology and religion into its own likeness.

It is a continual source of satisfaction to the believer in God's impartial goodness and universal grace to see that all the sects differing from his own have made and are making such constant progress toward his own cherished faith on the subjects pertaining to human destiny. While most of the standard creeds have remained unchanged, the real and expressed opinions of those belonging to the churches representing them have been continually modifying, liberalizing, approaching his own sentiments. Every advance of scholarship has been toward the positions of Universalist scholars; every new view taken has been in the direction of Universalist interpretations; as the head has acquired intelligence, and as the heart has expanded, in all sects human intellect and human sympathies have approached our conclusions; and it needs no prophetic gift to see that the day is not far distant when the differences among Christians concerning man's ultimate destiny will be abolished, and when there will be substantial agreement among Christians on this vital subject of human thought. Already it can be truthfully said that there was never

a time since the first few years after the death of the Christ, when Christians were so near the simplicity and purity of his religion as they are to-day. And yet, when the work of reform was initiated by a few plain men, a century ago, the churches of Christendom, in their creeds, their pulpits, their literature, and well nigh universally among their communicants, accepted unchallenged and received without demur the monstrous errors that now only exist in the creeds, but that are repudiated by the people of all churches, — and by none more emphatically than is frequently done by those who still nominally accept the creeds that retain them.

In order to know precisely what Partialism really is, it is not sufficient to ask some unfaithful, time-serving clergyman who semi-occasionally, or never, announces the unpalatable tenets he has solemnly vowed to declare in season and out of season, but we must consult the accredited platforms of the various churches, and the utterances of those who have frankly avowed them. To this task we now proceed, first presenting the principal creeds, and then tracing the progress of thought in the churches professing them.

THE LEAVEN AT WORK.

CHAPTER I.

THE CREEDS.

WHAT do the creeds and their authorized and candid exponents say of man's destiny? What are the doctrines actually obligatory, to-day, on the members of the dominant churches, as they are recorded in the creeds that have never been officially repudiated, — that are inscribed on the banners of the more prominent churches?

I. *The Presbyterian Creed.* — The Westminster Confession of Faith, which is the basis of the Presbyterian church, comprising eight-tenths of the people of Scotland, and a multitude in America and throughout the English-speaking world, will tell us. A century ago scarcely a member of that body could be found to question its statements. Now, however, there are many who, while they receive it for "substance of doctrine," and "as a whole," decline to accept its more monstrous features. In fact, it

has become customary of late to receive into churches members who will not accept the creed, though all ministers are required to sign its statements antecedent to ordination. But even they — to judge by their subsequent preaching — sign it with much “equivocation and mental reservation,” and with many different mental attitudes.

Here are extracts from the “Confession of Faith,” with references to chapters and sections:—

“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and some foreordained to everlasting death (iii. 3). They whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (xvii. 1). Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved (x. 4). These angels and men, thus predestinated and preordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished (iii. 4). Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only (iii. 6). The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice (iii. 7). Man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto

(ix. 3). As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God as a righteous judge for former sins doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts, &c. (v. 6). By this sin they [our first parents] fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. . . . They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed our actual transgressions (vi. 2, 3, 4). Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, — spiritual, temporal, and eternal (vi. 6). Much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and to the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious and to be detested (x. 4). Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things that God commands, and of good use both to themselves and to others, yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God (xvi. 7; iii. ix.; vi. 4). But the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (xxxiii. 2). [The “Larger Catechism” says, “cast into-

hell and be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.”] Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated in Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and how, and where he pleaseth. . . . Others not elected . . . cannot be saved (x. 4).”

The “Shorter Catechism,” one of the Presbyterian standards, declares : —

“The covenant being made with Adam not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression. . . . The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery. . . . The sinfulness of that estate whereunto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin ; together with all actual transgressions that proceed from it. . . . All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the sins and miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. . . . God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.”

This election includes the doctrine that babes not elected are lost. One of the ministers who constructed the Catechisms called infants “fuel of hell,” “sinking and swimming in the black lake.” And the Moderator, in his “Vessels of Mercy and Wrath,” says “thousands of infants are damned only for Sin Original.”

The “Larger Catechism” repeats the sentiment of one of the articles in the answer to Question 90 :

"They, who, having never heard the Gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature or to the law of that religion which they profess."

These dogmas were reaffirmed, substantially, by the New School Presbyterians, in what is called the Auburn Declaration, even so late as A. D. 1837:

"While repentance for sin and faith in Christ are indispensable to salvation, all who are saved are indebted, from first to last, to the grace and Spirit of God. And the reason that God does not save all is not that he wants the power to do it, but that in his wisdom *he does not see fit* to exert that power further than he actually does." (Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. iii. p. 779.)

In the same creed occurs also the following:
"God from eternity has determined to renew and sanctify and save a part only of mankind." In another article we are informed that—

"As a consequence of Adam's transgression his descendants are not only doomed to temporal death, but are also born into this world in such a state that as soon as they are moral agents, they freely sin by transgressing the divine law, and are by nature and without the interposition of divine grace, in respect to moral character, wholly sinful, and therefore justly exposed to the wrath of God."

This was called a revised and reformed creed at the time of its appearance in the "New Englander."

II. *The Congregational Creed.*—The ancient standards of this sect have not only never been repudiated officially, but they have been affirmed over and over again. Says the Savoy Confession (A. D. 1658):—

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and *others foreordained to everlasting death.*

"These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished.

"They [our first parents] being the root, and by God's appointment standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them in ordinary generation.

"Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called to the ministry of the word.

"Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither do nor can come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved.

"Much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious and to be detested.

"Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved but the elect only."

Chapter iii. section 6 says: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased Redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same."

These doctrines are reaffirmed in the platform of the Andover (Massachusetts) Seminary, where Congregational ministers are graduated each year, every

professor in which is required at his inauguration to swear that he believes every statement, which oath he must renew every five years. Says the Andover Platform : —

“ Adam, the federal head and representative of the human race, was placed in a state of probation, and that in consequence of his disobedience his descendants were constituted sinners ; that by nature every man is depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God, and that previously to the renewing agency of the Divine Spirit, all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God ; that, being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation ; so that, ‘ except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ; ’ that God of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, and that he entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of this state of sin and misery by a Redeemer ; that the only Redeemer of the elect is the eternal Son of God, who for this purpose became man, and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever ; that Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a Prophet, Priest, and King ; that, agreeably to the covenant of redemption, the Son of God, and he alone, by his suffering and death, has made atonement for the sins of all men ; that repentance, faith, and holiness are the personal requisites in the gospel scheme of salvation ; that the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of a sinner’s justification ; that this righteousness is received through faith, and that this faith is the gift of God, so that our salvation is wholly of grace ; that no means whatever can change the heart of a sinner and make it holy ; that regeneration and sanctification are effects of the creating and renewing agency of the Holy Spirit, . . . but that the wicked will wake to shame and everlasting contempt, and with devils be plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever. I moreover believe that God, according to the counsel of his own will and for his

own glory, hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and that all beings, actions, and events, both in the natural and moral world, are under his providential direction; that God's decrees perfectly consist with human liberty, God's universal agency with the agency of man, and man's dependence with his accountability; that man has understanding and corporeal strength to do all that God requires of him, so that nothing but the sinner's aversion to holiness prevents his salvation; that it is the prerogative of God to bring good out of evil, and that he will cause the wrath and rage of wicked men and devils to praise him, and that all the evil which has existed and which will forever exist in the moral system will eventually be made to promote a most important purpose under the wise and perfect administration of the Almighty Being, who will cause all things to work for his own glory, and thus fulfil all his pleasure. And furthermore, I do solemnly promise that I will open and explain the Scriptures to my pupils with integrity and faithfulness; that I will maintain and inculcate the Christian faith as expressed in the creed by me now repeated, together with all the other doctrines and duties of our holy religion, so far as may appertain to my office, according to the best light God shall give me, and in opposition, not only to atheists and infidels, but to Jews, Papists, Mahometans, Aryans, Pelagians, Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, Sabellians, Unitarians, and Universalists, and to all heresies and errors, ancient and modern, which may be opposed to the Gospel of Christ, or hazardous to the souls of men; that by my instruction, counsel, and example, I will endeavor to promote true piety and godliness; that I will consult the good of this institution and the peace of the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ on all occasions; and that I will religiously conform to the constitution and laws of this seminary, and to the statutes of this foundation."

Our Congregational brethren frequently declare that they have progressed a long way from the theology of the Puritans, and we are often reprimanded

for holding them to the old platforms. And yet, in January, 1870, the National Council in Boston went down to Plymouth and re-affirmed the confessions and platforms of 1648 and 1680. The document most appropriately emanates from "among the graves." Let an extract from the declaration of the American Congregational Church, and not any unauthorized member, tell us what progress that church has made as a body in two centuries. The Declaration says: —

"Standing by the rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon the spot where they worshipped God, and among the graves of the early generations, we, elders and messengers of the Congregational churches of the United States, in National Council assembled — like them acknowledging no rule of faith but the word of God — do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches, held by our fathers and substantially as embodied in the confessions and platforms which our synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or re-affirmed. We declare that the experience of the nearly two and a half centuries which have elapsed since the memorable day when our sires founded here a Christian commonwealth, with all the development of new forms of error since their time, has only deepened our confidence in the faith and polity of those fathers. We bless God for the inheritance of these doctrines. We invoke the help of the divine Redeemer, that, through the presence of the promised Comforter, he will enable us to transmit them in purity to our children."

III.— *The Baptist Church.* — The Baptists, while denying the right of the general body to dictate to the local church according to their accepted Congregationalism, have been noted for avowing a rigid and

rigorous faith in the "orthodox" doctrines. They have been in full accord with the extreme portions of the "evangelical" church. There are some notable signs of the progress of liberal thought among them, as we shall show hereafter, but the body as a whole agrees with the Presbyterian and Congregational statements of belief, and with its chief modern exponents. The Philadelphia "Confession of Faith" (A. D. 1742) recites substantially the generally accepted doctrines of the fall of Adam, hereditary depravity, etc., and in section xxxiii. says that at the last judgment "the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day." In section xxxiv., after describing the last judgment, it is declared : —

"The wicked shall be cast into eternal torments, and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

IV. *The Episcopal Articles.* — The doctrines of this sect are set forth in its "Articles of Religion." The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, both in the English edition of 1571, and the American revision of 1801, declare : — .

"ART. IX. Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is far gone from original righteousness and is of his own nature inclined to evil,

so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.

"ART. X. The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.

"ART. XXII. Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honor."

Here it is distinctly stated that all men are responsible for Adam's sin, are liable to God's wrath and curse, not because they follow Adam, but because they are born into this world inheriting his nature; that they cannot of themselves repent; and that only those turn to God whom God compels; and thus, as the damnation is not for deeds committed, but for inheriting a depraved nature, it logically follows that infants are damned. Indeed, the doctrine of this church of baptismal regeneration gives emphasis to this statement, for while there are probably few among clergy or laity who would not repudiate infant damnation, the doctrine once preached is logically the teaching of the Articles.

However, it should be observed that there is great latitude tolerated to the clergy and laity of this

church. They accept the creeds with many shades of construction. As many as fourteen have been named, and as one has listened to the preachers not only of the Episcopal Church, but of other denominations, he might well think that the latitudinarian example had been imitated. These are some of the ways in which it has been said that the creeds are construed by those who profess them : —

- I. In the sense of the imposers of the Articles.
- II. In the sense of the compilers.
- III. In their strict, obvious, and literal sense.
- IV. In any sense which the words will bear, consistently with the subscriber's interpretation of Scripture.
- V. As articles of peace.
- VI. As true in general, and sufficiently so for their intention, though not true as to every particular proposition.
- VII. As far as they are agreeable to the word of God.
- VIII. As far as they are fundamental articles of faith, necessary to salvation.
- IX. On the authority of others, believing that others believe them to be true.
- X. In any sense which approved doctors of the church have affixed to them.
- XI. As mere forms of admission into office.
- XII. In Paley's sense, as originally intended to exclude only three classes of men from the church, namely, Papists, Puritans, and Anabaptists.
- XIII. In the sense of the members of the church, though different from that expressed in the Articles.
- XIV. In *no sense*, or as *nonsense* ; in which sense the majority perhaps subscribe, alleging that it is well known to those who receive their subscriptions that they know nothing about the Articles, or do not believe them, and that therefore they deceive nobody.

V. *The Methodist Episcopal Church.* — The creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church is the same as that of the Episcopal Church ; so that what we have said of the first applies to the second. But it must be stated that while the first has risen far higher than the doctrines of the Articles, the Methodist people have kept consistently down to the lower level of the authorized standards. But even this church has made progress in the direction of light and truth. How “ the people called Methodists ” have interpreted their creeds will appear in subsequent pages.

VI. *The Wesleyans.* — However the different branches of the Methodist Church may differ on other points, — “ Church North and Church South,” Protestant, Episcopal, or Wesleyan, — they unite in their profession of the old creed. Says the “ Wesleyan Methodist Catechism ” : —

“ What sort of a place is hell ?

“ Hell is a dark and bottomless pit, full of fire and brimstone.

“ How will the wicked be punished there ?

“ The wicked will be punished in hell by having their bodies tormented with fire, and their souls by a sense of the wrath of God.

“ How long will their torments last ?

“ The torments of hell will last forever and ever.”

But the English Wesleyans very generally repudiate the old error, as will be seen later in these pages.

VII. *The Roman Catholic Creed* is the "Declaration of the Council of Trent," as authoritatively interpreted by the Church Councils and the Pope. It contains the harshest and cruellest tenets of mediæval theology. Those doctrines have been reaffirmed, as in 1869, in the pastoral address of the council held in Baltimore, written by Archbishop Spalding, foeticide is denounced on the ground that the unborn infant, not being baptized, is lost, — the crime thus involving the murder of the soul as well as of the body.

At the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the order of the Jesuits, celebrated in Boston, the historical and eulogistic discourse was delivered by Bishop O'Reilly, of Springfield, who among other things gave utterance to the following : —

"No one outside of the church of Jesus Christ can be saved ; and it is needless to prove that this church is the only church of Jesus. One might as well have tried to be saved outside of the ark in the days of Noah."

This leaves a narrow verge for the rest of us, — only a heaven for Roman Catholics, with all the rest of mankind finally in hell.

Quotations might be multiplied ; but it is unnecessary, as no one looks for modifications in this church. It may, however, be said that its doctrine of purgatory renders it far superior to most of the churches of Christendom.

It was when the foregoing creeds held unquestioned dominion in Christendom that a handful of unlettered men assembled in Winchester, New Hampshire, in 1803, and adopted the following as the platform of the Universalist denomination : —

“ART. I. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind.

“ART. II. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is Love, revealed in one Lord, Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

“ART. III. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practise good works ; for these things are good and profitable unto men.”

A comparison of the average belief among Christians then and now will show something of the leavening effect already produced by these new statements of Christian truth.

CHAPTER II.

REPRESENTATIVE INDORSEMENTS OF THE CREEDS.

THOSE who invented the doctrines that have here been printed in their credal form, and those who have interpreted them, leave it impossible to doubt that they were once presented as explicitly as they are stated in the platforms. We will now give representative declarations of those competent to speak. Any number of quotations might be given, but it will be only necessary to present a few that we have gleaned that speak for the general sentiment of their contemporaries. They are given in the order in which the creeds are printed in the preceding chapter.

Said John Calvin (Commentary on John xvii. 9):

“Whence it appears that the whole world does not belong to its Creator; only that grace snatches a few from the curse and wrath of God and from eternal death, who would otherwise perish, but leaves the world in the ruin to which it has been ordained.”

Elsewhere Calvin adds:—

“Unde factum est, ut tot gentes una cum liberis eorum infantibus æternâ morte involveret lapsus Adæ absque remedio,

nisi quia Deo ita visum est? *Decretum quidem horribile, fateor.*"¹

Translation: "Again I ask whence it happened that the fall of Adam involved without remedy in eternal death so many nations, together with their infant children, except because it so seemed good to God? A horrible decree, I confess."

"Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that any one is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd, because election itself could not exist without being opposed to reprobation. Whom God passes by, therefore, he reprobates, and from no other cause than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his children."²

Luther declared (on Psalm xxix.):—

"We say that children are conceived and born in sin, and cannot be saved without Christ, to whom we bring them in baptism; . . . for without Christ is there no salvation. Therefore Turkish and Jewish children are not saved, since they are not brought to Christ."

Rev. Mr. Shaw, in the "Exposition of the Confession of Faith" (p. 59), says:—

"The decree of God relates to all future things without exceptions. Whatsoever was done in time was foreordained before the beginning of time.

"Our confession teaches that God made choice of and predestinated a certain definite number of individuals unto everlasting life. . . . Christ died expressly for the elect, and purchased redemption for them alone; . . . in no sense did he die for the rest of the race. . . . Our Confession first asserts, positively, that the elect are redeemed by Christ, and then, negatively, that none others are redeemed, but the elect alone."

¹ Instit. iii. 23.

² Instit. ii. 163.

William Twisse, moderator of the Westminster Assembly, declared : —

“Many infants depart from this life in original sin, and consequently are condemned to eternal death.”¹

Rev. Christopher Love (1679) said : —

“If all the land were paper, and all the water in the sea were ink, as many pens as grass upon the ground, and as many writers as sands upon the seashore, all would be too little to set forth the torments of hell.”

Toplady declared : —

“It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense, — that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil ; but the believing spiritual man sees no absurdity in all this, knowing that God would be never a whit less good even though he should destroy all men.”²

Boston, in his “Four-fold State,” says : —

“No pity shall be shown them the [damned] by their nearest relations. The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her ungodly husband ; the godly husband shall say ‘Amen’ to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom ; the godly parents shall say ‘Hallelujah’ at the passing of the sentence against their ungodly child ; and the godly child shall from his heart approve the damnation of his wicked parents, — the father who begat him and the mother who bore him.”

A hundred years ago, these horrible statements were scarcely questioned. Dr. Philip Schaff, a Presbyterian, admits that —

¹ *Vindiciæ*, i. 48.

² Toplady on Predestination.

"The scholastic Calvinists of the seventeenth century mounted the Alpine heights of eternal decrees with intrepid courage, and revelled in the reverential contemplation of the sovereign majesty of God, which seemed to require the damnation of the great mass of sinners, including untold millions of heathen and infants, for the manifestation of his terrible justice. Inside the circle of the elect all was bright and delightful in the sunshine of infinite mercy; but outside all was darker than midnight."¹

Perhaps Robert Pollok, in his "*Course of Time*," has expatiated on this theme as fully as any writer. To open his book seems like uncapping the pit. A vivid imagination excited by his words can almost behold the tossings and upheavings and contortions of lost souls writhing in the molten lava of God's infinite wrath. Much might be quoted from this author, but his lurid language is too familiar to need reproduction in these pages. His poetry is really an unvarnished description of that awful world which people all around us profess to believe, but talk of with a pleasant smile. No, it does not approach the reality; but it resembles it in some faint degree. • He tells us what will become of countless millions, though only now and then one is able to describe it so clearly. Men are forever to wish to die; and to quench their thirst cups of burning gall are to be presented to their lips. And this by the being who loves and sent Jesus to save men!

¹ *Harmony of Reformed Confessions*, p. 47.

As lately as the days of Dr. Gardiner Spring, we were informed that —

“It will be a glorious deed when he who hung on Calvary shall cast those who have trodden his blood under their feet into the furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. When the omnipotent and angry God, who has access to all the avenues of distress in the corporeal frame and all the inlets to agony in the intellectual constitution, undertakes to punish, he will convince the universe that he does not gird himself for the work of retribution in vain.”

Occasional traces of the old doctrines are still seen, though for the most part they are kept securely bottled in the creeds, and are rarely uncorked in the pulpit.

In 1859, Rev. R. W. Patterson, D.D., in a sermon before the American Board, declared : —

“The great Scriptural doctrine that this is the only place of probation to the members of our fallen race, and that those who die out of Christ are lost forever, sets before our minds an awful view of the destiny that awaits the majority of the living generation of our race ; while it presses home an appeal to the sympathies of all who know the value and preciousness of the Christian hope, which must, if anything can, stir them up to make haste and send the word of life to their dying fellow-sinners. It bids us to keep in mind that the time is short within which there can be anything done to save the six hundred millions of heathen, and the three or four millions of Mohammedans and dead formalists and heartless unbelievers who are now hastening to the close of their probationary life without any preparation for a happy eternity. And it admonishes us to remember that we ourselves can have, at the most, only a few years to be spent in efforts to rescue the souls of our fellow-heirs of immortality from the woes of the second death.”

The next year (1860) the "Princeton Review" contained an article entitled "The Heathen Inexcusable for their Idolatry," in which the author said : —

"They who have never known of a Saviour cannot be guilty of the sin of rejecting him. What, then, is the ground of their condemnation? This question is an important one ; for if the heathen are not under condemnation, what is the use of sending them the gospel? If the heathen, or the greater portion of them, are to get to heaven through their ignorance, where is the necessity for any clearer light, — which, reasoning from all past experience, the greater majority will not receive? The question, in fact, lies still farther back, — as to the necessity of any gospel at all. If we, or any single individual man, could have been saved without the atonement, then righteousness would have been by that method, and Christ would not have died. The gospel, however, looks upon all as in a state of condemnation, and that none can hope for justification and eternal life except through the righteousness of Christ alone. . . . The heathen are under condemnation, and to them a dark and hopeless one ; they know of no escape. While, therefore, their sin is far less than of those who know the remedy and reject it, still their condition is one which should excite our deepest pity and compassion."

Professor Hodge of the same institution declared : —

"The heathen in mass, with no single definite and unquestionable exception on record, are evidently strangers to God, and are going down to death in an unsaved condition. The presumed possibility of being saved without a knowledge of Christ remains, after eighteen hundred years, a possibility illustrated by no example."

To which assented J. D. Davis, D.D., a missionary of Kiyoto : —

"It is probably true that some are saved among the millions of Japan, but it is to be feared that they are very, very few ; whether it is one in ten thousand, or one in a million, we cannot know."

In July, 1870, the "Chicago Interior," the able and amiable organ of the Presbyterian Church in Northwestern America, made this notable declaration : —

"In a day when creeds and confessions are sneered at and boastfully scouted by professedly 'liberal Christians' not only, but by some who still retain a home in Orthodox churches, it is *cheering* to see the strengthening hold that the said creeds and confessions have upon the confidence and affection of truly evangelical bodies in our land.

"The recent meeting of the General Assembly illustrates this. Not only does this powerful body adhere to the Westminster Confession with all the *tenacity and warmth of affection* which have characterized the whole history of the Presbyterian Church in this country, but it is safe to say that but for the Westminster Confession, loved and clung to through all changes of the thirty years of separation, reunion could never have been effected. This noble Confession has virtually bound the body together, even while nominally sundered. . . .

"And so the Confession, remaining all the time unchanged, tended to change coldness into the warmth of affection, and slight differences into substantial agreement, and unseemly estrangements into the cordial 'communion of saints,' till the gentle but mighty process culminated in such a fraternal union as was exhibited in the first Assembly of the Reunited Church.

"*The Reunited Church, then, will not be likely very soon to look coldly on her Confession, whatever those who hate confessions may say to the contrary.*"

And still later, in 1874, one of the charges (in Specification 12) brought against the Rev. David Swing, of Chicago, in his trial for heresy, was that —

“He has used language in respect to Penelope and Socrates which is unwarrantable and contrary to the teachings of the Confession of Faith, chap. x. sec. iv. ; that is to say, in his sermon entitled ‘Soul Culture’ the following passage occurs : ‘There is no doubt the notorious Catherine II. held more truth and better truth than was known to all classic Greece, held to a belief in a Saviour, of whose glory that gifted land knew nought ; and yet such is the grandeur of soul above mind that I doubt not that Queen Penelope, of the dark land, and the doubting Socrates have found at heaven’s gate a sweeter welcome, sung of angels, than greeted the ear of Russia’s brilliant but false-lived queen.’”

In 1879 Prof. F. W. Patton, now president of Princeton, who conducted the trial of Professor Swing, and who will generally be acknowledged to be a qualified and authorized exponent of Presbyterianism in America, for several Sundays occupied the pulpit of Dr. John Hall’s church in New York. A correspondent of the “Church and People” heard him preach on one of the mornings during the period of his supply. The correspondent owns himself “a moderate Calvinist,” and he was so startled at the ultra-Calvinism of Professor Patton that he says :—

“For the first time in my life I began to suspect that there was but a step between the extremes of Calvinism and Universalism, unless God’s love be the very opposite of what the gospel pictures it, and Dr. Patton admits, — namely, infinite.”

The reporter took down the preacher’s words in short-hand, and we are thus informed as to what Presbyterianism was, even in the year 1879. This

is Professor Patton's exact language. In describing the invisible church — those destined to be finally saved — he said : —

“The church is the body of believers chosen in the eternity past to be saved in the eternity to come. We know something about this invisible church. We know that it consists of a definite number that can neither be increased nor diminished. We know that this number has been fixed from all eternity. We know how they became members of that church, — not by any act of theirs, nor through any calculations or chance, but by the choice of a loving and tender God. We know that there are no backsliders, no hypocrites, no erasures from the Lamb's Book of Life ; no instance where the angels, having rejoiced over the repentant sinner, begin to feel that their rejoicing was too soon or too premature. We know that the membership in this church consists of all those who have been chosen by God through all eternity, and realize it.”

In keeping with the before-quoted language are the words of Rev. T. L. Cuyler, D.D., one of the most popular writers for the religious press, who says in the “ Illustrated Religious Weekly ” : —

“That tremendous gathering will be followed by tremendous separations. That sharp line of division shall cut right through congregations, right through families, and shall cleave off sometimes the tender cord of wedlock. ‘ Parents and children then shall part,’ was a solemn line that I used to hear sung in the revival meetings of my early boyhood, with a sort of shudder. But I have since found out that it was an awful and inexcusable cruelty to conceal such a fact from those to whom God sent me as a faithful watchman and a preacher of his word.”

In 1883, the “ Presbyterian Weekly ” published this statement : “ *The Presbyterian church, as a body,*

has always held, and still holds, the doctrine of elect infants."

To see the progress that has been made by this branch of the church in theological belief, the reader has but to contrast the creed and the declarations of those who have been its interpreters, with what he knows to be the tone of its pulpit everywhere at the present moment: there is an entire absence of the ancient utterances. It is safe to say that should the clergy of that church be faithful to its standards, and explicitly preach its real doctrines, it would be left deserted by the mass of its people. It only maintains its position by recreancy to its standards.

The Congregationalists have been as consistent in their advocacy of the old errors as were the Presbyterian authorities just quoted. Theoretically this body has not advanced from the original darkness of mediævalism. John Robinson, the preacher of the Pilgrims in Leyden said: —

"The infants saved are saved by the grace of God in Christ. Those that perish (though I desire, if such were the will of God, and could gladly believe if the Scriptures taught it, that all were saved) do *perish for that original guilt and corruption wherein they are conceived and born*, being the children of wrath by nature, and thereby liable to God's curse every way. . . . Since all children are by nature children of or subject to wrath, and which God might in justice destroy, why should it seem harsh unto these men that he should execute his justice upon some and show mercy unto others and save them?"¹

¹ Works, iii. 231-233.

And Jonathan Edwards descended to the most minute particulars of the horrors of the creed, now so studiously ignored even by those who profess it. Said he : —

“Every time they [the saints] look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God in making them so to differ. The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever.”

If this were so, what a delectable place would heaven be, and how much meaner and more supremely selfish and cold-hearted its inhabitants than the basest children of earth. The savage Doctor revels in his evil words : —

“The saints will not be sorry for the damned ; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them. But on the contrary, when they see the sight (the endless torments of the damned), it will occasion rejoicing, and excite them to joyful praises.”

Suppose this principle were reduced to practice on earth, and that the saints expressed no regret over the misery of the unregenerate, and rejoiced in their suffering. Would it not prove them hardened, selfish wretches? That belief in such a heaven ever existed is almost a proof of total depravity, for it would seem that no other character could conceive the thought.

Edwards continues : —

“The God who holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked ; his wrath toward you burns

like fire ; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire ; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight ; you are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours.

“ When you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it ; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or serpent, but shall have no hope of it ; when you would rejoice if you might have any relief after you have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it ; when after you have worn out the ages of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest, day or night, or one minute’s ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered ; when after you have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer the end of your torments, but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend forever and ever, and that your souls, which have been agitated by the wrath of God all this while, will yet exist to bear more wrath, — your bodies, which have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet, which shall not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past.”¹

It is refreshing to read that after listening to such horrible blasphemy for twenty-three years, the disgusted laymen of Northampton, Mass., voted 20 to 1 to hear no more of it from Mr. Jonathan Edwards, the patron-saint of New England Congregationalism.

In emulation of Edwards, Rev. Samuel Hopkins, one of the tutelary saints of this denomination, declared : —

¹ Sermon on the Eternity of Hell Torments.

"This display of the divine character will be most entertaining to all who love God, will give them the highest and most ineffable pleasure. Should the fire of this eternal punishment cease, it would in a great measure obscure the light of heaven, and put an end to a great part of the happiness and glory of the blessed."

And Dr. Nathaniel Emmons, of like precious faith, affirmed : —

"One part of the business of the blessed is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torments will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking part with those miserable objects, will say, 'Amen, alleluja, praise the Lord !' *It concerns, therefore, all the expectants of heaven to anticipate the trying scene, and ask their hearts whether they are on the Lord's side, and can praise him for reprobating as well as electing love.*"¹

Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, in his "Day of Doom," represents God as trying to make it easy for reprobate infants, by saying to them at the day of judgment (verse 166) : —

"Then to the bar they all draw near
 Who died in infancy,
 And never had no good or bad
 Effected personally,
 But from the womb unto the tomb
 Were straightway carried,
 Or at least ere they transgressed,
 Who thus began to plead : " —

But the judge answers them (verse 180) : —

¹ Works, vi.

“You sinners are, and such a share
 As sinners may expect,
 Such you shall have, for I do save
 None but mine own Elect.
 Yet to compare your sin with their
 Who liv'd a longer time,
 I do confess yours is much less,
 Though every sin 's a crime.

“A crime it is, therefore in bliss
 You may not hope to dwell ;
 But unto you I shall allow
 The easiest room in Hell.”

The “poem” continues : —

“One natural brother beholds another
 In this astonied fit,
 Yet sorrows not thereat a jot
 Nor pities him a whit.
 The godly wife conceives no grief,
 Nor can she shed a tear,
 For the sad state of her dear mate,
 When she his doom doth hear.
 He that was erst a husband pierced
 With sense of wife's distress,
 Whose tender heart did bear a part
 Of all her grievances,
 Shall mourn no more as heretofore,
 Because of her ill plight,
 Altho' he see her now to be
 A damned forsaken wight.
 The tender mother will own no other,
 Of all her numerous brood,
 But such as stand at Christ's right hand,
 Acquitted through his blood.
 The pious father had now much rather
 His graceless son should lie

In hell with devils for all his evils,
Burning eternally,
Than God most high should injury
By sparing him sustain ;
And doth rejoice to hear Christ's voice
Adjudging him to pain.

"But get away without delay,
Christ pities not your cry ;
Depart to hell, there may you yell
And roar eternally.

"The saints behold with courage bold,
And thankful wonderment,
To see all those that were their foes
Thus sent to punishment."

Rev. Josiah Spalding, in a book entitled, "Universalism Destroys Itself," says : —

"They [the saints] look down and see their own dearest kindred in hell, under all the bitter agonies of death, and they stand unmoved at the sight ; they maintain perfect calmness and undisturbed joy. They hear the judge pronounce the final sentence ; they see all the wicked sink down to hell, and hell moved with devouring flames to meet them, — a sight infinitely more dreadful than the sinking of worlds. At the same time they begin the triumph song ; they see the power of God employed in the most terrible manner to make their nearest and dearest connections forever miserable.

"And for this display of his power they ascribe unto him blessings and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving. *This consideration, were there no other, is proof that the redeemed in heaven stand complete in holiness. They feel exactly as God feels, according to their measure, as they are filled with all the fulness of God.*"

Benjamin Keach, Nonconformist, two hundred years ago, said, —

“And as a stinking steam and smoke
Of brimstone bad does smell,
And blinds the eyes, and stomach chokes,
So are the pangs of hell.

“Here meets them now that worm that gnaws,
And plucks their bowels out ;
The pit, too, on them shuts her jaws :
This dreadful is, no doubt.”

Again, in Alleine's “Alarm to the Unconverted”
(ed. 1672, p. 189), we have this description of hell : —

“How furious are the tormentors ! 'Tis their only music to hear how their miserable patients roar, to hear their bones crack. 'Tis their meat and drink to see how their flesh frieth, and their fat droppeth, to drench them with burning metal, and to rip open their bodies and pour in the fierce and fiery brass into their bowels and the recesses and ventricles of their hearts.”

“The great motive to missionary effort, — the heathen are expressly doomed to perdition. Six hundred millions of deathless souls on the brink of hell ! What a spectacle ! ”¹

Professor Park, of Andover, said in an installation service in Providence, R. I. : —

“There is depravity enough beneath the smile of an infant to damn it to all eternity ! ”

It is well for us occasionally to resort to these frank exponents of error, in order to see clearly the enormity of their doctrines. We rarely hear or read from modern divines naked statements of their views. Liberal preaching in “Orthodox” pulpits

¹ American Board of Missions. Quoted in Alger's *Doct. Fut. Life*, p. 544.

is fashionable, and the prophets prophesy smoothly. They so lard their speech with smooth words that the unreflecting are deceived into a nominal acceptance without perceiving what they embrace. If all modern preachers were as outspoken and explicit as the authors we have quoted, popular churches would soon present a "beggarly account of empty boxes." They would not be tolerated.

So far as we have been able to read former Orthodox descriptions of the eternal world, we have found the character of the damned much more amiable than that of the saved. While the wicked utter awful imprecations on their own heads, and on the author of their misfortunes, it is only the good who chuckle and gloat and scream with rapture over the agonies of others. They are pure and holy, and yet they do what a decent man would not be guilty of over a vile rat or venomous snake.

The Baptist people have been in the front rank of the explicit advocates of this dreadful doctrine. Spurgeon says, —

"Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God, and it shall be written 'Forever!' When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torment they shall say, 'Forever!' When they howl, echo cries 'Forever!'"

He says to the sinner, in his sermon on "The Resurrection."

"Thou wilt have twin hells; thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. *In fire, exactly like that*

which we have on earth, thy body will lie, asbestos-like, 'forever unconsumed.'"¹

And on Psalm ix. 17, he observes : —

"How solemn is the seventeenth verse, especially in its warning to forgetters of God ! The moral who are not devout, the honest who are not prayerful, the benevolent who are not believing, the amiable who are not converted, — these must all have their portion with the openly wicked in the hell which is prepared for the Devil and his angels. There are whole nations of such. The forgetters of God are far more numerous than the profane or profligate; and according to the very forceful expression of the Hebrew, the nethermost hell will be the place into which all of them shall be hurled headlong."²

The expressed declarations of Baptists do not indicate progress sufficient for much congratulation, except so far as a very general silence characterizes them on themes that once formed the staple of preaching. Perhaps as much as any other branch of the Protestant church, the Baptists are where their ancestors were a century ago. But how little one would suspect it from the average preacher.

Just how their creed was formerly preached by Episcopalians may be seen by consulting the language of Bishop Jeremy Taylor : —

"The bodies of the damned shall be crowded together in hell like grapes in a wine-press, which press one another till they burst. Every distinct sense and organ shall be assailed with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings. Husbands shall see their wives, parents shall see their children, tormented before their eyes.

¹ Cited in Alger's History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, p. 518.

² Treasury of David.

“As the slaves of the earth are whipped and punished by their masters, so the slaves of hell are tormented by the devils, who have power and dominion over them, and who lay upon them a thousand afflictions, griefs, and miseries. Every member of their bodies shall suffer more pain and torment than if it were torn from the body. If one cannot tell how to suffer a toothache, headache, or pain of the colic, what will it be when there shall not be any joint, or the least part of the body, which shall not cause him intolerable pain, — not only the head or teeth, but also the breasts, sides, shoulders, the back, the heart, and marrow ?”

Even the hymns of good Dr. Watts were sung in all Episcopal churches. We quote a few stanzas. Some of the lines will be recognized, but others of them are not often met with : —

“My thoughts on awful subjects roll, —
 Damnation and the dead.
What horrors seize the guilty soul
 Upon a dying bed !

“Lingering about these mortal shores,
 She makes a long delay ;
Till like a flood with rapid force
 Death sweeps the wretch away !

“Then swift and dreadful she descends
 Down to the fiery coast
Among abominable fiends,
 Herself a frightful ghost.

“There endless crowds of sinners lie,
 And darkness makes their chains ;
Tortured with keen despair, they cry,
 Yet wait for fiercer pains.

“Not all their anguish and their blood
 For their old guilt atones,

Nor the compassion of a God
Shall hearken to their groans."

"Down in the deep where darkness dwells—
The land of horror and despair—
Justice has built a dismal hell,
And laid her stores of vengeance there!

"Eternal plagues and heavy chains,
Tormenting rocks and fiery coals,
And darts to inflict immortal pains,
Dyed in the blood of damned souls.

"There Satan, the first sinner, lies,
And roars, and bites his iron bands;
In vain the rebel strives to rise,
Crushed with the weight of both thy hands."

And Charles Wesley, who, unlike his brother, never broke with the Episcopal Church, says in Hymn XI., on "*God's Everlasting Love*:"—

"A real fiery, sulphurous hell
Shall prey upon our outward frame."

Canon Farrar quotes a hymn such as once interpreted the Episcopal creed ("Mercy and Judgment," p. 132):—

"His nostrils breathe out fiery streams;
And from his awful tongue
A sovereign will divides the flames,
And thunder rolls along.

"Think, O my soul! the dreadful day
When this incensed God
Shall rend the sky, and burn the sea,
And fling his wrath abroad!

“Tempests of angry fire shall roll
To blast the rebel worm,
And beat upon his naked soul
In one eternal storm.”

It is due to candor to say that such blasphemous sentiments are now rarely heard in Episcopal circles. But if they are not believed, why are they not officially discarded? The contrast between the doctrines once believed and preached and those now cherished and advocated is exhibited by placing the words of Jeremy Taylor with the language heard from the average Episcopal pulpit of to-day and seen in our quotations on subsequent pages, from Farrar, Holland, Newton, etc.

The Methodists have outstripped their Articles of Religion in their advocacy of the savage doctrines of partialism. John Wesley himself said : —

“But what if you were compelled to hold one of your fingers in the flame of a lamp for a whole year. How could you endure the agony caused by the fire upon even this little member? But what if in place of a finger it was your whole hand or arm, and you were compelled to feel your arm continually burning but never consumed? Would not such speechless agony be more than you could endure? But in place of being an arm, what if it were thy whole body? and in place of its being a whole year, it were a whole lifetime? yea, for a whole eternity? How unspeakable the agony of the fire forever burning thy whole body, but never destroying it!

“But some one will ask if this is material fire.

“There is no other fire but material fire! And to say that the fire of hell is not material fire is to contradict the Bible and to give the lie to the plainest teachings of Christ.

“But an objector asserts, ‘If it be material fire, the whole body would soon consume away, and thus render its punishment impossible.’ Nay; for God is able to render our bodies immortal, to even the consuming fires of hell, and thus to render them capable of eternal anguish, ‘where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.’”

The old horrors are still occasionally uttered. Says Rev. T. R. Strowbridge, in a recent “Christian Advocate”:—

“None of the prophets or apostles lifted the hatches off of hell as did the loving Jesus. He brought death and immortality to light in all the fiery distinctness of a flaming hell.”

Observe how this man perverts the Scripture. The apostle says that Jesus “brought *life* and immortality to light.” But the exigencies of the Methodist creed compel him to add to the Word of Life by substituting death for life. So, too, in May, 1881, the “Northwestern Christian Advocate” (Chicago) said, in its exposition of the Rich Man and Lazarus:—

“But at the prayer of despair, the cry extorted by suffering, *he [God] will laugh, and at their calamity brought on by sin, in eternity he will mock.*”

And Rev. F. H. Newhall, D. D., in “Zion’s Herald”:—

“The man Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, for three years bore the world upon his shoulders and received into his heart all the fiery arrows of hell.”

This church has recorded itself as the Bourbon among the sects. For it says in its Articles of Religion: —

“The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.”

In spite, however, of resting under the incubus of a fossil creed, this great and growing church is expanding its faith. Parchment cerements are easily burst where there is real life within them. A live church will snap dogmas as Samson burst the green withes of the Philistines. The Methodist ministry is frequent in its advocacy of the doctrine of endless woe, but its laity that reject it are to be counted by tens of thousands.

A few quotations may be given from Catholic authors.

Saint Augustine. — “Not all, nor even a majority, are saved.” (Enchiridion, cap. 24. Opp. vi.)

“They [the saved] are indeed many, if regarded by themselves, but they are few in comparison with the far larger number of those who shall be punished with the devil.” (Contra Cresco.)

“It can be lightly said that infants passing out of the body without baptism, will be in a damnation the mildest of all.” (De Peccat. i. 16.)

Saint Thomas Aquinas. — “That the saints may enjoy their beatitude more thoroughly, and give more abundant thanks to God for it, a perfect sight of the punishment of the damned is granted to them.” (Summa III: Stipp. Qu. 93, 1.)

Peter Lombard. — “Therefore the elect shall go forth to see the torments of the impious, seeing which they will not be grieved,

but will be satiated with joy at the sight of the unutterable calamity of the impious."

"A crowd of men sink daily to Tartarus as thick as the falling snowflakes." (Cornelius à Lapide, num. xiv. 30.)

Dante. — "The spirits of unbaptized infants are in the first circle of the Inferno, where they desire to see God, but have no hope." (Inf. iv. 28-43.)

Such quotations as these from all the ancient churches might be made till they would fill volumes. Gerhard, a celebrated German theologian, said : —

"The blessed will see their friends and relations among the damned as often as they like (*quotiescunque voluerint*), but without the least compassion."

Dr. Lewis Du Moulin (*Moral Reflections*) : —

"There is not above one saved of a hundred thousand, or rather of a million, from Adam to the day of judgment."

What the doctrine of endless hell torments really is, can never be stated in human language. Nowhere, in all the extravagance and delirium of religionists, can we find sentiments in relation to God more fiendish than the efforts of mistaken Christians to describe it. Ransack the lore of antiquity, the parchments and books of ancient and modern times, written outside the pale of Christianity, and there are found sentiments to match them uttered by those who professed to believe that God is love, and yet who supposed that he would consign a portion of his intelligent offspring to never-ending wretchedness and woe.

CHAPTER III.

TESTIMONY TO THE EVIL INFLUENCE OF THE CREEDS.

MEN seem to have schooled themselves until a comparatively recent period to contemplate the horrid results indicated by their creeds with equanimity, and sometimes with infernal delight. Think of exulting over the endless tortures of the damned, as did Tertullian, quoted below. And what are the prominent dogmas inculcated by these creeds and advocated by those who accepted them?

1. The election of some to endless happiness, and the reprobation of others to infinite and unending torture, without any regard whatever to the conduct or character of either.

2. The torment without alleviation or end of the larger portion of the human family, making the saved only a small minority at most.

3. The utter woe and misery of all who had never heard of Christ, no matter how moral might have been their lives.

4. The roasting — “liquefying,” Tertullian calls it — in literal fire and brimstone, of those who were to

be consigned to suffering; “burning forever, yet unconsumed.”

5. The torment of infant children, — innocent infants, whose misfortune in not having been elected was to be reckoned as a fault deserving all the tortures that infinite wrath could originate and perpetuate.

Believers in these doctrines who were not made fiends like Tertullian must have been wretches whose lives were rendered a “cruel bitter” by such a dreadful faith. Millions who died and made no sign must have found life a nightmare and death a terror, while other millions recoiled from such monstrous sentiments into infidelity.

These are the words of Tertullian (Catholic), whose heart it hardened into fiendishness : —

“What a variety of spectacles shall then appear! How shall I admire, how laugh, how exult, how rejoice, when I behold so many kings, worshipped as gods in heaven, together with Jove himself, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in raging fire with their scholars, whom they persuaded to despise God, and to disbelieve the resurrection; and so many poets, shuddering before the tribunal, not of Rhadamanthus, not of Minos, but of the disbelieved Christ! Then shall we hear the tragedians, more tuneful under their own sufferings; then shall we see the players, far more sprightly amidst the flames; the charioteer, all red-hot in his burning car; and the wrestlers hurled, not upon the accustomed list, but on a plain of fire!”

No wonder John Bunyan (Puritan), in view of such sentiments, said : —

“ I blessed the condition of the dog or toad, because they had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of hell.”

And others have confessed, Archer Butler, for example : —

“ Were it possible for man's imagination to conceive the horrors of such a doom as this, all reasoning about it would be at an end; it would scorch and wither all the power of human thought.”¹

Volumes might be quoted to show the way in which the old creeds were realized, and their effect on the minds of those who really accepted them. “ Bloody Mary ” thus defended her cruelty to heretics, according to Bishop Burnet : —

“ As the souls of heretics are hereafter to be eternally burning in hell, there can be nothing more proper than for me to imitate the Divine vengeance by burning them on earth.”

Sismondi says, in his history of the crusades against the Albigenses in the thirteenth century :

“ Monks showed how every vice might be expiated by crime; how remorse might be expelled by the flames of their piles; how the soul, polluted with every shameful passion, might become pure and spotless by bathing in the blood of heretics. By continuing to preach the crusade, they impelled, each year, waves of new fanatics upon those miserable provinces; and they compelled their chiefs to recommence the war, in order to profit by the fervor of those who still demanded human victims, and required blood to effect their salvation.

¹ Sermons, second series, p. 233.

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"The more zealous, therefore, the multitude were for the glory of God, the more ardently they labored for the destruction of heretics, the better Christians they thought themselves. And if at any time they felt a movement of pity or terror whilst assisting at their punishment, they thought it a revolt of the flesh which they confessed at the tribunal of penitence; nor could they get quit of their remorse till their priests had given them absolution. Amongst them all not a heart could be found accessible to pity. Equally inspired by fanaticism and the love of war, they believed that the sure way to salvation was through the field of carnage. Thus did they advance, indifferent whether to victory or martyrdom, certain that either would issue in the reward which God himself had destined for them."

And Isaac Taylor (*Restoration of Belief*, p. 367) :

"The same gospel which penetrates our soul with warm emotions, dispersive of selfishness, brings in upon the heart a sympathy that tempts us often to wish that itself were not true, or that it had not taught us so to feel."

The French Catholic Saurin's heart was broken, as he cried, in a well-known passage, "I sink, I sink, under the awful weight of my subject;" concluding, "I find in the thought [of endless woe] a mortal poison which diffuseth itself into every period of my life, rendering society tiresome, nourishment insipid, pleasure disgustful, and life itself a cruel bitter. I cease to wonder that the fear of hell hath made some mad and others melancholy."

Keble, in the "Christian Year," sings : —

"Spirits lost in endless woe,
May undecaying live.
Oh, sickening thought !"

Dr. Watts, in his "Day of Judgment," thus describes a scene which modern preachers are not apt to allude to in terms so explicit : —

"Thoughts, like old vultures, prey upon their heart-strings,
And the smart twinges when the eyes behold the
Lofty Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance
Rolling afore him.

"Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver;
While devils push them to the pit, wide-yawning,
Hideous and gloomy to receive them headlong
Down to the centre."

These doctrines continued to be so devoutly accepted that as late as 1831, Rev. Dr. Austin, of Worcester, Mass., committed suicide under their malign influence. Rev. Dr. Tenney (Congregational) of Weathersfield, Conn., said in the sermon preached at Dr. Austin's funeral : —

"But for the last three or four years, a thick and dark cloud has hung over the course and enveloped in dismay the mind of our revered friend. He lost nearly all hope of his own reconciliation to God and interest in the Redeemer. He sunk into a settled, deep, religious melancholy, which occasionally appeared in paroxysms of despair and horror. His bitter moanings were, at times, sufficient to wring with sympathetic anguish the most unfeeling heart."

Commenting on the above the "Unitarian Advocate," July, 1831, remarks : —

"Dr. Austin, for a long time before his death, was in a state little short of madness ; and we do not see what is to hinder that effect in a man who sincerely believes in endless misery, and

applies his doctrine to himself. The same remark may be made concerning the celebrated Dr. Bellamy, well known as an orthodox divine. Cowper, the beautiful poet, it is well known, more than once attempted to destroy his life through the influence of religious melancholy. He was led into a deep consideration of his religious state, and having imbibed the doctrine of election and reprobation in its most appalling rigor, he was led to a very dismal state of apprehension. We are told 'that the terror of eternal judgment overpowered and actually disordered his faculties ; and he remained seven months in a continual expectation of being instantly plunged into eternal misery.' Although he at times recovered from this dreadful depression, he at last sunk under it, being gradually worn out, and he expired upon his bed."

Thirty-five years ago the celebrated Moses Stuart (Congregational) declared : —

"There are minds of a very serious cast, and prone to reasoning and inquiry, that have in some way come into such a state, that doubt on the subject of endless punishment cannot without the greatest difficulty be removed from them."

After describing these doubts he adds : —

"If there are any whose breasts are strangers to such difficulties as these, they are to be congratulated on having made attainments almost beyond the reach of humanity in the present world ; or else to be pitied for ignorance, or the want of a sympathy which seems to be among the first elements of our social nature. With the great mass of thinking Christians I am sure such thoughts as these must, unhappily for them, be acquaintances too familiar. That they agitate our breasts as storms do the mighty deep will be testified by every man of a tender heart, and who has a deep concern in the present and future welfare of those whom he loves." ¹

¹ Biblical Repository, 1850.

The terrible experience of the amiable Cowper represents that of thousands.¹

He thus describes himself: —

“Look where he comes ; in this embowered alcove
Stand close concealed and see a statue move ;
Lips busy and eyes fixt, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now ; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure or command,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ;
Both fail beneath a fever’s secret sway,
And like a summer brook are past away.
This is a sight for pity to peruse
Till she resemble faintly what she views ;
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain
Pierc’d with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion and receives the least.”

Says the eminent Presbyterian theologian, Rev. Albert Barnes, in a well-known passage: —

“That the immortal mind should be allowed to jeopard its infinite welfare, and that trifles should be allowed to draw it away from God, and virtue, and heaven ; that any should suffer forever, lingering on in hopeless despair, and rolling amidst infinite torments, without the possibility of alleviation and without end ; that since God can save men, and will save a part, he has not purposed to save all ; that on the supposition that the

¹ See Cowper’s Correspondence, and *Encyclopædia Americana*, article “Cowper.”

atonement is ample, and that the blood of Christ can cleanse from all and every sin, it is not in fact applied to all ; that, in a word, a God who claims to be worthy of the confidence of the universe, and to be a Being of infinite benevolence, should make such a world as this — full of sinners and sufferers ; and that when an atonement had been made, he did not save all the race, and put an end to sin and woe forever. . . . I have read, to some extent, what wise and good men have written. I have looked at their theories and explanations. I have endeavored to weigh their arguments, for my whole soul pants for light and relief on these questions. But I get neither ; and in the distress and anguish of my own spirit, I confess that I see no light whatever. I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world ; why the earth is strewn with the dying and dead ; and why man must suffer to all eternity. I have never seen a particle of light thrown on these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind ; nor have I an explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest, which would be of relief to you. I trust other men—as they profess to do—understand this better than I do, and that they have not the anguish of spirit which I have ; but I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and sufferers, upon death-beds and grave-yards, upon the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer forever ; when I see my friends, my family, my people, my fellow-citizens, when I see a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger, and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet he does not do so, — I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it.”¹

No wonder Rev. W. G. T. Shedd, D. D. (Presbyterian), fourteen years later, wrote of a doctrine which he has tried to defend, even in the year of grace 1887, “dark and awful.”²

¹ *Prac. Sermons*, pp. 123-125.

² *Guilt of the Pagan*, 1864, p. 23.

Henry Rogers agrees with the foregoing, and shows us what would be the wretchedness of all benevolent, sensitive souls, should the old horrors be fully realized : —

“For my part I fancy I should not grieve if the whole race of mankind died in its fourth year. As far as we can see, I do not know that it would be a thing much to be lamented.”¹

Rev. Dr. W. W. Patton (Congregational) declares the idea of endless torment —

“revolting to our moral sense. . . . To assert gravely, then, that the heathen who have never heard of Christ are shut out from all possible hope of pardon, and are not in a salvable position in their present circumstances, is to offend the moral sense of thoughtful men, as well as that of the common multitude. . . . Such a theory practically denies the divine grace by suspending its exercise, so far as the heathen (the majority of the human race) are concerned, upon the action of those already enlightened. It declares that there is no possible mercy for the heathen unless Christians choose to carry the gospel to them. Does it seem rational, or in harmony with the universality and freedom of God’s grace, that the only possibility of salvation for the mass of mankind should be suspended, not on anything within their control, but on the conduct of men on the opposite side of the globe? By such representations the minds of men are shocked, and a reaction takes place, which is unfavorable, not only to the cause of missions, but to evangelical religion as well.”²

A few years later Dr. Patton, then editor of the Chicago “Advance,” thus confessed judgment : —

“Do you imagine that only Universalists shudder at the idea of eternal ruin of souls? All men share your dread of the fact, and would gladly reject the doctrine. We have had neighbors,

¹ Greyson Letters, i. 34.

² Bibliotheca Sacra, July, 1858.

friends, and dear relatives, who have died giving no evidence of Christian character, but of quite the opposite, and we should be overjoyed that at least we should all meet above, holy and happy. I frankly acknowledge that it would lift a dark cloud from the world, and a heavy load from my heart could I believe your doctrine!

And the same journal said of Lady Byron's Universalism : —

“It is natural and pleasant to indulge in such a dream, and, like many another dream, we could wish it were true.”

Volumes might be written on the scepticism, distrust of God, melancholy, and despair, resulting often in suicide, and other ill effects caused by the proclamation of these creeds, and belief in them.

The great parent of modern infidelity is the doctrine of endless punishment. On this point the advocates of the doctrine and infidels agree.

Says George Sand : —

“The Roman Church . . . committed suicide on the day she made God implacable and damnation eternal.”

And says Leslie Stephen : —

“If this be the logical result of accepting theories, better believe in no God at all.”¹

John Stuart Mill said : —

“Compared with this [endless punishment], every other objection to Christianity sinks into insignificance.”²

Mill also says : —

¹ English Thought in Eighteenth Century.

² Autobiography, p. 41; Three Essays, p. 114.

"If, instead of the glad tidings that there exists a Being in whom all the excellencies which the highest human mind can conceive exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving does not sanction them, convince me of it and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do ; he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures ; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling, to hell I will go."

Dean Milman gives his testimony as follows : —

"To the eternity of hell torments there is and ever must be, notwithstanding the peremptory decree of dogmatic theology, and the reverential dread in many minds of tampering with what seems to be the language of the New Testament, a tacit repugnance." ¹

Rev. Baldwin Brown, of England, asks : —

"How can any one who even dips into the current literature help perceiving that this is one of the main causes of the alienation from Christianity of the educated mind ?" ²

The poet sings his indignation thus : —

"Were it not thus, O King of my salvation,
Many would curse to thee, and I, for one,
Fling thee thy bliss and snatch at thy damnation,
Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun,

¹ Latin Christianity, vi. 253. ² Ch. Qu. Rev., July, 1877.

Ring with a reckless shivering of laughter,
Wroth at the woe which thou hast seen so long,
Question if any recompense hereafter
Waits to atone the intolerable wrong."

Canon Farrar says : —

"There are many of the highest intellects among the laity and among our most eminent literary and scientific men who regard the popular teaching respecting 'endless torment' as one of their most insuperable difficulties in the way of accepting the Christian faith."

These expressions indicate the scepticism that exists in multitudes of minds that have been driven to reject the Christian faith by the thought that the dogma of eternal retribution is a tenet of Christianity.

Rev. Dr. Atwood, in his "Fifty Years' Progress" (in America) describes some of the disastrous effects of these doctrines ; and with these cogent presentations we conclude this chapter : —

"If we could place ourselves in the midst of the society of one hundred years ago, we should presently become aware that the most intelligent men and women of the day — especially those in public or prominent station — had very little interest in, or respect for, the prevailing Christianity. We should find such men as Fisher Ames, James Otis, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Ethan Allen, Nathaniel Greene, in the higher circles of the communities to which they respectively belonged, and such men as Winthrop Sargent and Richard Gridley in inferior ranks, either quietly ignoring the Church, or, when pressed, boldly ridiculing its abhorrent and absurd dogmas. The fact is, in 1776, as for fifty years before and

nearly as long afterwards, there was no place inside the Church, nor even within nominal fellowship, for any intelligent, self-respecting man who had outgrown the unreasonable and monstrous dogmas of the Calvinistic theology. Every year the ranks of those stigmatized as deists or infidels by the clergy were largely recruited. The churches were losing the ablest, brightest, and most influential men of the day, to the great injury of the loser and the lost. . . . There was no genuine Christian truth offered in the market. The preachers uniformly taught for doctrine the commandments of men; and the most irrational and abominable commandments, too, that the folly or malevolence of men ever devised. It will surely be set down in the fair, clear record of impartial history that the bad theology of the early American churches changed their good tendency of freedom and toleration into censoriousness, exclusiveness, and bigotry; that on account of this fatal change they alienated the best minds from their influence and fellowship; and that the future which the remorseless logic of events mapped out before the Calvinistic churches of this country a century ago was one of diminishing numbers, influence, and intellectual power. . . . Consider now that at the time of which I am speaking there had not arisen anywhere within the pale of Christian faith a sect that pretended to interpret Christianity on rational principles, or that ventured to suggest even the probability that God might not cast off forever any of his children for mere errors of opinion; . . . the recognized orthodoxy, a type of religious thinking and preaching more learnedly absurd, and piously blasphemous, and ingeniously unreasonable, than the world ever elsewhere saw."

It was at this period, and under the circumstances so well described above, that the doctrines of the Universalists took their rise and began their remarkable career of progress. Some of the results of this new influence in religious thought will be described in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCESSIONS ON VITAL WORDS AND PHRASES.

A CAREFUL study of the subject, and a collation of all accessible authorities shows that for a hundred years there has been a constant modification of opinion in the direction of the positions of Universalist thinkers and scholars. The alteration of opinion by Biblical critics of all schools besides those of our own church has always been toward, and never from our views. So true is this that it would not be difficult to quote from recognized leaders in other churches definitions of terms and even exegeses of passages of Scripture that really surrender all the ancient positions, and admit that our principles of exposition, and even our application of them are correct. In fact, the first ray of light that began the process of enlightenment in the "orthodox" churches was probably the discoveries of candid "orthodox" scholars.

For example, take the pivotal words of the controversy between the advocates of endless punishment and their opponents, — the words rendered "everlasting" and "eternal." When the great modern

controversy began, the Universalist positions were scouted; now the best scholars in all partialist churches substantially admit our conclusions.

The words *αἰών*, *αἰώνιος*, etc., rendered "eternal," "everlasting," "forever," are spoken of by the best critics as not necessarily denoting endless duration. See the following authorities: —

Hesychius: "An interval denoting time, sometimes infinite when spoken of God."

Schleusner: "A space of time to be determined by the person or things spoken of, — a long-enduring, but still definite period of time."

Macknight (Scotch Presbyterian): "These words, being ambiguous, are always to be understood according to the nature and circumstances to which they are applied. They who understand these words in a limited sense when applied to punishment put no forced interpretation upon them."

Alex. Campbell: "Its radical idea is indefinite duration."

The eminent German scholar, Olshausen, says: —

"The Bible is deficient in an expression for timelessness. All the Biblical expressions imply or denote long periods."

Even Augustine caught a glimpse of the fact that his followers for centuries overlooked. He said: —

"I would not say this so as to seem to close the door to a more careful consideration as to the punishments of the lost, and the sense in which they are in Scripture called eternal."¹

And Windet declared: —

"The frequent *ledorî doroth* of the Rabbis ("to generations of generations") the equivalent of *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*

¹ Commentary on Matt. xxv. 46.

("forever and ever") of the New Testament, meant a finite period."¹

But until recently such views were rare and exceptional. Still, as Archdeacon Farrar truly observes : —

"Dark as is the prospect of wicked men, awful as may seem their ultimate doom, it would yet be sinful and faithless to quench every apparent gleam of hope respecting their future lot which to some eyes has always seemed to be dimly discernible on the far horizon."²

Dr. Isaac Watts caught the idea, even in his day :

"There is not one place of Scripture where the word 'death,' as it was first threatened in the law of innocency, necessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the soul, either to Adam, the actual sinner, or to his posterity."³

Even F. W. Faber admits : "In the use of the Scripture argument the triumph is completely and most remarkably on the milder side."⁴

John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh, a most eminent Greek scholar, philologist, and author, in "The Natural History of Atheism," says : —

"The doctrine of endless torment is a very ugly porter standing at the gate of the house which is called Beautiful."

Concerning the Greek word translated "eternal," he says : —

¹ De Vita functora statu, p. 170, 1633.

² Mercy and Judgment, p. 179.

³ Ruin and Decay of Mankind.

⁴ Creator and Creature, iii. 332.

"It needs no very profound scholarship to know that the word *aiōnios*, which we translate "everlasting," does not signify eternity absolutely and metaphysically, but only popularly, as when we say that a man is an eternal fool, meaning only that he is a very great fool."

In April, 1886, Dr. Blackie wrote to the author of this book concerning *aiōn*, *aiōnios* : —

"There can be no doubt that you have exhausted the philology of *aiōn*. Your patience is even more commendable than your learning. The fact of the matter is, that it is not so much Greek as common-sense that is required to see clearly in matters of this kind ; and common-sense will teach any man that the language of the Bible is throughout popular, and not to be strained to meet the demands of scholastic system-mongers."

Rev. Dr. Deems renders Matthew xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting life, and the wicked into everlasting punishment," thus : —

"They shall go away, — the righteous, that is, the humane, into continuous life; the wicked, that is the inhumane, into continuous punishment. He [Jesus] does not tell us how long that punishment and that life shall be. He uses the word *aiōnios*, which specially conceals any definite conclusion. It may be endless, it may have an end."¹

Bishop Warburton declares, —

"In the Jewish Republic, both the rewards and punishments promised by Heaven were temporal only, — such as health, long life, peace, plenty, dominion, etc., diseases, premature death, war, famine, want, subjections, and captivity, etc. And in no one place of the Mosaic Institutes, is there the least mention or intelligent hint of the rewards and punishments of another life."²

¹ Life of Jesus, p. 599.

² Divine Legation.

Whately says : —

“As for a future state of retribution in another world Moses said nothing to the Israelites about that.”¹

Jahn, whose work is the text-book in the Andover Theological Seminary, says : —

“We have no authority, therefore, decidedly to say that any other motives were held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue good and avoid evil than those which were derived from the rewards and punishments of this life.”²

Milman says : —

“The Lawgiver [Moses] maintains a profound silence on that fundamental article, if not of political, at least of religious legislation, — rewards and punishments in another life. He substituted temporal chastisements and temporal blessings. On the violation of the constitution followed inevitably blighted harvests, famine, pestilence, defeat, captivity ; on its maintenance, abundance, health, fruitfulness, victory, independence. How wonderfully the event verified the prediction of the inspired Legislator ! How invariably apostasy led to adversity — repentance and reformation to prosperity.”³

Rev. James Challis, Professor of Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge, England, is reported by the “Christian Union” as expressing himself upon the question of eternal punishment. “He maintains that *endless and eternal* are not convertible terms ; that no such epithet as *endless* is applied in Scripture to future punishment ; and that the purpose of justice will be fulfilled when the great and final tribulation has availed for the purification and salvation of the

¹ Peculiarities Christ. Rel.

² Arch. sect. 314.

³ Hist. Jews, vol. i. 117.

condemned." Dr. Edward Beecher, on page 296 of his "History of Retribution," says: —

"Eternal punishment cannot be sustained or defended on the ground on which it is placed by the orthodox generally; that is, the doctrine of the fall in Adam, as it is explained either by Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, or Dr. Shedd of New York, or Dr. Woods, of Andover, or any other Orthodox man whom I have ever read. I believe that to punish endlessly men born as any form of that system represents, and placed in this world as men are, under satanic delusions and powerful evil social influences, would be an extreme of injustice and cruelty that would entirely transform the character of God. Think of it! This is the result of the toil of centuries, to vindicate God from the charge of the most atrocious injustice and cruelty that the mind of man can conceive. The acts seem to be unjust, merciless, unfeeling, and cruel, in God. No one has shown, or can show, that they are not; the leaders acknowledge that they cannot do it, and yet the whole doctrine of eternal punishment is based on this transaction; it grows out of it, and is indissolubly connected with it. . . . It does not dishonor God to declare that he will not punish sinners forever. It does infinitely dishonor God to assert that he will punish sinners forever, if he has dealt with them as this doctrine of sinning in Adam teaches. It is a well-known fact that this doctrine, so connected with eternal punishment, has produced infidels, — God only knows how many."

Prof. Tayler Lewis was one of the most erudite and profound of modern scholars and theologians of the "evangelical" school. He remarks: —

"The preacher, in contending with the Universalist and the Restorationist, would commit an error, and it may be, suffer a failure in his argument, should he lay the whole stress of it on the etymological or historical significance of the words *αἰών*, *αἰώνιος* (rendered "everlasting," etc.), and attempt to prove that of themselves they necessarily carry the meaning of endless

duration. In Matt. xxv. 46, These shall go away into the punishment of the world to come, etc., is all we can etymologically or exegetically make of the word."¹

Archdeacon Farrar thus sums up the concessions of multitudes of the best scholars in all churches:

“‘Endless torments’ is an expression for which there is not an iota of direct Scriptural authority.”²

The Greek words rendered hell (hades (Hebrew sheol) and Gehenna), are admitted by the best Orthodox critics not to signify what the popular mind understands by “hell.”

“We cannot pretend to decide *à priori*, or previous to the event, so far as to say that the punishments of hell must and will be certainly eternal.”³

Windet says:—

“Most Jews lay down that Gehenna, as the Greeks do that Tartarus, is appointed not so much for the torment as for the purification of the most wicked.”⁴

Martin Luther (quoted by Farrar, “Mercy and Judgment,” p. 189) says:—

“There was another question, whether God in or after death can bestow faith, and through faith can save. We will not decide that question.”

Campbell thus defines

“Gehenna, . . . the valley of Hinnom is a part of the pleasant wadi or valley which bounds Jerusalem on the south.”

¹ Lange's Eccl. p. 48.

² Mercy and Judgment, p. 386.

³ Dr. Doddridge Theol. Sect.

⁴ De Vita functora statu, 1633.

Schleusner :—

“Gehenna, — the valley of the sons of Hinnom — was a delightful vale,” etc.

Bailey’s English Dictionary on the same word : —

“A place in the valley of the tribe of Benjamin, terrible for two sorts of fire in it, that wherein the Israelites sacrificed their children to the idol Moloch, and also another, kept continually burning to consume the dead carcasses and filth of Jerusalem.”

Parkhurst, in his Lexicon, referring to this passage, says : —

“The phrase here translated ‘hell-fire’ (literally ‘gehenna of fire’) does, I apprehend, in its outward and primary sense, relate to that dreadful doom of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom.”

Our Hebrew friends have their word to speak on this question.

Rabbi R. Lasker : —

“Ours is the religion of humanity, and we do not believe that the all-wise, loving Father will consign to endless torture any of His creatures. As to the future life we know nothing, except we believe that the good will be rewarded, and the evil will receive the due penalty of their sins. But everlasting punishment — oh, no; we do not believe in that.”

Dr. Wise, a rabbi of Cincinnati, says : —

“That the ancient Hebrews had no knowledge of hell is evident from the fact that their language has no term for it. When they in after times began to believe in a similar place, they were obliged to borrow the word ‘Gehinnom,’ ‘the valley of Hinnom,’ a place outside of Jerusalem, which was the receptacle for the refuse of the city, — a locality which by its offensive smell and sickening miasma was shunned, until vulgar superstition surrounded it with hobgoblins. In the Mishnah of the latest

origin, the word 'Gehinnom' is used as a locality of punishment for evil-doers, and hence had been so used at no time before the third century, A. D."

Dr. Lilienthal, another learned rabbi, says : —

"The Valley of Gehinnom, situated on the southeast of Jerusalem, and formerly dedicated to Moloch, the fire-idol, gave the title to their notions of hell. But, though their writings speak of hell and hell-fire, yet they never dreamt of eternal punishment. Their teaching asserted the wicked and evil-doers have to suffer for twelve months a punishment adequate to their crimes and vices, but that after this term of retribution they too are released. Even the dark mediæval notions of the rabbis abhorred the idea of eternal punishment."

Trench, on the Parables, says : —

"Neither ['sheol' nor 'hades'] is hell, though to issue in it."

Dr. Knapp : —

"Neither of these ['sheol' nor 'hades'] signifies the place of the damned."

Dr. Hodge : —

"To descend into hades or hell means nothing more than to descend to the grave," etc.

A subscriber to the "Illustrated Christian Weekly," published by the American Tract Society, asked the editor of that paper the meaning of the statement that "Christ descended into hell." The editor replied : —

"The shortest answer is, he died. It means nothing more nor less than that our Lord was dead till the third day. 'Hell' here is hades; and 'hades' means the state of departed spirits, — not the place of punishment at all."

And yet every now and then the old abomination asserts itself, as some hereditary physical deformity will occasionally reappear in children. No longer ago than November, 1878, notwithstanding the admission that "hades" is not "hell," and that Dives was not in endless torment, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Quarterly," of Chicago (1878), thus took the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus as literal :

" See Dives in the flames below,
With burning thirst consumed,
Writhing in torment, pain, and woe, —
To endless sorrow doomed.

" CHORUS. — Sinners, beware, the warning take,
Avoid the flames of hell;
Escape the fiery, burning lake,
That you in heaven may dwell.

" With supplicating voice he cries,
For comfort and relief.
But Abr'am his request denies,
Nor will assuage his grief.

" CHORUS. — Sinners, beware, etc.

" The wretched beggar at his door,
Ascends to joys above,
To live in bliss forevermore,
And praise redeeming love.

" CHORUS. — Sinners, beware, etc.

" O God, assist me by thy grace,
To shun the pains of hell,
Conduct me to thy heavenly place,
Eternally to dwell.

" CHORUS. — Sinners, beware, etc."

Bishop S. M. Merrill, Methodist, says ¹: —

“‘Sheol’ does not express duration. ‘Tartarus’ (2 Pet. ii. 4) should have been transferred without translation (p. 24). ‘Hades’ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew ‘sheol’ (ib.). It means the unseen world, the place of departed souls, and expresses nothing as to their character or condition; hence its true and only application is to the state of the dead between death and the resurrection (p. 25). ‘Gehenna’ is a proper name, — the name of a place well known, and should have been transferred and not translated (p. 26). ‘Hades’ is applied never to anything beyond the resurrection (p. 28). Tartarus is the prison for the fallen angels this side of the judgment. It is therefore substantially the same as hades. Hades covers the entire ground this side of the resurrection. Its duration is limited. In the resurrection it will give up its dead *and pass away*, at least so far as we are concerned. Therefore *the punishment in it is not forever*” (pp. 28–29).

This concedes that the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus does not teach endless punishment, for the place in which he was suffering is to pass away. “The resurrection destroys both death and hades.”

The Revised Version surrenders the word “hell” wherever it is translated from “hades,” and retains the original word, — one of the most important concessions yet made; but to have been consistent, “Tartarus” and “Gehenna” should have been allowed to stand untranslated.

“Hades” is the original for “hell” in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and is found many times

¹ New Test. Idea of Hell, 1878, p. 23.

² Ibid., p. 76.

in the Greek Old Testament. Dr. Dorner holds that "hades" is used in the New Testament as a general term for the intermediate place of the dead, — just as the Greeks used it. So Delitzsch ; and this has been put forth by Joseph Cook, in one of his Monday lectures. It is being generally adopted by the best scholarship. This view has been advocated by Universalist writers for a century. It is comforting to see "evangelical" scholars, one by one, adopting our conclusions. When the religious history of the past century comes to be accurately written, it will be recorded that the Universalist Church has led the van on matters of eschatology. Every change in the popular view of hell has been directly toward the expositions on which we have been insisting for a hundred years.

All critics of any prominence concede that the Old Testament does not teach endless punishment. This virtually concedes that the New Testament does not teach it, for the same words that describe the duration of punishment in the New are employed for the same purpose in the Old, — the words rendered "everlasting," "eternal," etc. The original for "everlasting" and "eternal" is often applied to punishment in that part of the Bible as in the other. (Jer. xxiii. 40 ; Dan. xii. 2.) And not only so, but the words that are descriptive of the locality or condition in which the punished suffer are the same in both ; that

is, "gehenna" and "hades." Now, if "everlasting," "forever," etc., and "gehenna" and "hades" in the Old Testament do not teach endless punishment, why should the same terms in the New be regarded as teaching the doctrine? Does not the concession concede and establish the Universalist position?

The New Testament makes use of a furnace fire to denote punishment. So does the Old Testament. (Isai. xxxi. 9.) The book of Revelation speaks of a lake of fire and brimstone, in which sinners suffer "day and night forever and ever." The book of Isaiah has its match, in a land of fire and brimstone; and the duration of its punishment is denoted by the same terms; and of both it is said, "The smoke ascendeth up forever and ever." (See Isai. xxxiv. 8-10.) These statements accord with the opinions of the greatest of modern commentators, Lange, who says:—

"That the Divine punishments, even beyond the grave and deep in the realm of death, have a tendency to conversion, although they glorify God's righteousness and guard his rights, Peter has quite decisively shown. How, then, can it be regarded as a glorifying of God when the Divine punishments which are awarded to the lost are considered solely as inflictions of vengeance or of retribution? In such a case these punishments are to be no more punishment in the full meaning of the word; and in this penal region, justice abandoned by grace is no more to stimulate, but to kill. If men will separate in this way justice from grace, they make a separation in God; and if, in consequence, they assign to justice through an endless eternity the office of tormenting in hell, so to speak, in a wholly isolated

position, half-severed from the whole living God, and sundered from grace and mercy, then in very deed they assign to justice a most painful office. But God is everywhere present as God, even in hell. And if one acknowledge the article, 'I believe in God Almighty,' one must feel that there is reference to the almightiness of his love also. But if his almightiness has eternal sway, it has a corresponding eternal operation. People, therefore, should not think that they are zealous for the glory of God, when in spirit they bind man endlessly to the evil consequences of his unbelief in this world and then endlessly bind the justice of God by itself to the endlessly bound man. . . . This sway of God demands an eternity, but for an eternity he does not lack ; he himself is the Eternal. But that he is certain of his goal is to us made just as certain by the sway of Christ lasting after the final judgment, across the æons. He will destroy death as the last enemy. But how could he destroy death without destroying sin, which is the essential death, — the seed of death ?" ¹

¹ Dogmatik, ii. sec. 1294.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONSENSUS OF COMMENTATORS.

NOT only have expositors and exegetes of all schools made such admissions in matters of criticism and exegesis as yield the points in dispute between Universalists and their opponents, but the great "proof-texts" of endless punishment have received such explanations from learned Partialist and unsectarian scholars as concede that the texts quoted against us are not opposed to our conclusions. The more learned and candid the exegete, the more in harmony with our views are his expositions. "Paige's Selections from Eminent Commentators" exhibits these opinions at length. We will here instance the more prominent : —

1. *The kingdom of heaven or of God* (Matt. iii. 2, etc.), from which some are said to be shut out, is the reign of Christ on earth, and not the final condition of things in the eternal world. — Hammond, Lightfoot, Doddridge, Whitby, etc.

2. *Wrath to come* (Matt. iii. 7, etc.) is the overthrow of the Jewish nation. — Pearce, Hammond, Clarke, Lightfoot, Wetstein.

3. *Cast into the fire* (Matt. iii. 10, vii. 19), judgments on the Jewish people in this world. — Hammond, Pearce, Beausobre and Lenfant, Lightfoot, Clarke, Kenrick.

4. *Unquenchable fire* (Matt. iii. 12, Luke iii. 17), the temporal judgments of God then about to come. — Pearce, Hammond, Cappe, Clarke, Kenrick.

5. *In no case enter the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. v. 20). Henry, Beza, and others say "enter the Christian Church on earth."

6. *In danger of hell-fire* (Matt. v. 22), exposed to burning in Gehenna, a valley near Jerusalem, where criminals were burned. — Clarke, Parkhurst (primarily), Wynne, Wakefield, Mac-knight, Heylin, Rosenmüller, Townsend.

7. *The uttermost farthing* (Matt. v. 26). This language applies to earthly affairs, and not to a *post-mortem* condition. — Dutch Annotations, Pearce, Tomson's Beza, Rosenmüller, Clarke.

8. *Cast into hell* (Matt. v. 29, 30; xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43-48). Most critics apply this language to a place of endless torment; though all admit that "hell" ("gehenna") literally denotes the valley of Hinnom.

9. *The strait gate* (Matt. vii. 13, 14; Luke xiii. 24), entering upon the enjoyment of the gospel. — Pearce and others.

10. *Depart from me, etc.* (Matt. vii. 23; Luke xiii. 23-30), the vanity of depending on any other hope than the gospel, in the then coming calamities on Judea. — Cappe, Jones.

11. *The house fell and great was the fall of it* (Matt. vii. 27; Luke vi. 49). This language is applied to this life by Tomson's Beza, Diodati, Rosenmüller, Kenrick.

12. *Outer darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth* (Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 2-14; xxiv. 45-51; xxv. 14-30; Luke xiii. 23-30). The best writers refer this to judgments then about to come on the earth. — Lardner, Whitby, Gilpin, Clarke, Pearce, Hammond, Kenrick.

13. *Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment* (Matt. x. 15), the woes coming on Jerusalem. — Hammond, Pearce, Wakefield, Clarke, Wetstein.

14. *He that endureth to the end shall be saved* (Matt. x. 22, xxiv. 12-14; Mark xiii. 13). Faithfulness to the end of the persecutions prophesied to those who heard Christ would secure men from the temporal destruction that was to befall others. — Hammond, Clarke, Whitby, Wetstein, Lardner.

15. *Destroy soul and body in hell* (Matt. x. 28 ; Luke xii. 5). This is usually applied to the final torment of the soul, though the commentators all agree that hell (gehenna) was a well-known locality near Jerusalem, where criminals' bodies were burnt. (See 8, above.)

16. *Capernaum brought down to hell* (Matt. xi. 22-24 ; Mark vi. 11 ; Luke x. 12-15). "Hell" here is *hades*, which the Revised Version allows to stand, thus admitting that it does not mean "hell." It should never be rendered "hell," says Campbell, but it means here temporal destruction, and not a place of punishment after death. So say Hammond, Pearce, Kenrick, Clarke, Wetstein, Whitby, Ainsworth, Hesychius, Beausobre and Lenfant.

17. *Not be forgiven in this world or in the world to come* (Matt. xii. 31-32 ; Mark iii. 29 ; Luke xii. 10), the Jewish and the Christian ages or dispensations. "World" (*aion*) should be "age" or "æon." — Hammond, Gilpin, Grotius, Pearce, Wakefield, Clarke.

18. *Bind them in bundles to burn them ; furnace of fire ; wailing and gnashing of teeth*, etc. (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43, 47-50). This was to take place at the end of the Mosaic dispensation, and at the beginning of the Christian, when the rebellious Jews were destroyed temporally. — Pearce, Hammond, Cappe.

19. *Lose his own soul* (Matt. xvi. 25, 26 ; Mark viii. 35-37 ; Luke ix. 24, 25). "Soul" should be "life ;" the passage does not refer to the immortal soul. — Pearce, Wakefield, Campbell, Clarke.

20. *The Son of man coming in the glory of his Father* (Matt. xvi. 27, 28 ; Mark viii. 38 ; ix. 1). This occurred while those lived who heard the Saviour's words. — Gill, Wynne, Clarke, Pearce, Hammond, Knatchbull, Lightfoot.

21. *Shall not enter the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. xviii. 3 ; Mark x. 15 ; Luke xviii. 17), the enjoyment of the Christian life on earth. — Gill, Hammond, Gilpin, Campbell.

22. *The greater damnation* (Matt. xxiii. 14 ; Mark xii. 40 ; Luke xx. 47), condemnation. — Farrar, Wynne, Pearce, Kenrick, Wetstein. (The Revision has eradicated the word "damnation").

23. *The child of hell* (Matt. xxiii. 15), a vile person. — Pearce, Wynne.

24. *Damnation of hell*, temporal calamity, of which the climax was in Gehenna, "when the Jewish State should be destroyed" — Pearce, Theophylact. (See 22, above.)

25. *Foolish virgins, — the door was shut*, etc. (Matt. xxv. 1-3), the end of the Jewish State. — Pearce, Hammond, Clarke, Beausobre and Lenfant, Rosenmüller.

26. *Everlasting punishment* (Matt. xxv. 46). The commentators admit that the coming here referred to was at the end of the Jewish State (see xxiv. 20), but most of them agree that while "everlasting" often means limited duration, this passage teaches endless punishment. All admit that the chapter generally refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, but they think that somewhere the Saviour made a transition, and described the final judgment. It is amusing to read their differing attempts to denote the point of departure. Cappe applies all the language of chapters xxiv-xxv to Jerusalem. So do Wynne and others.

27. *Good for that man if he had not been born* (Matt. xxvi. 24; Mark xiv. 21; Luke xxii. 22). A proverbial form of speech, not to be taken literally. — Hammond, Clarke.

28. *He that believeth not shall be damned* (Matt. xvi. 16). Condemnation, suffering, is the unbeliever's lot. — Campbell, Horne, Cappe.

29. *All likewise perish* (Luke xiii. 3, 5), suffer temporally, as did those referred to in the context. — Hammond, Pearce, Whitby, Calmet, Scott, Doddridge.

30. *The rich man in hell*. The Revision employs "hades" instead of "hell;" and all commentators admit that "hades" does not denote hell. It is thought to be a parable by Lightfoot, Whitby, Hammond, Wakefield, Campbell, etc., and is applied to the condition of Jews and Gentiles in this world — an allegorical description of their condition here — by Lightfoot, Gill, Theophylact, Bate.

31. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John iii. 3; also, 1 Cor. vi. 9-11; Gal. v. 19-21; Eph.

v. 5) refers to the necessity of a new birth in order to enjoy the higher life here. — Diodati, Pearce, Whitby, Hammond, Gilpin.

32. *The resurrection of damnation* (John v. 29) refers to a spiritual awakening here. — Lightfoot, Doddridge, Whitby.

33. *Die in your sins ; where I am, thither ye cannot come* (John vii. 34 ; viii. 21), refers to immediate following, but does not mean shall literally *never* come, as Jesus said the same to his disciples (xiii. 33). — Gilpin, Elsley, Doddridge, Calmet, Grotius.

34. *The son of perdition* (John xvii. 12 ; 2 Thess. ii. 3) means that he resembles that for which he is named ; as “ son of thunder,” “ son of wisdom,” etc. — Rosenmüller, Wakefield, Whitby.

35. *Go to his own place* (Acts i. 25), to the punishment he deserved. — Clarke, Gilpin.

36. *What must I do to be saved ?* (Acts xvi. 30), to preserve himself, to avoid punishment for what had befallen the prisoners. — Rosenmüller, Wakefield, Keurick.

37. *Judgment to come* (Acts xxiv. 25), the calamities about to come on the times. — Haweis, Kingsley.

38. *The day of wrath* (Rom. ii. 5), coming temporal judgments. — Hammond, Whitby.

39. *Vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction* (Rom. ix. 22), the Jewish people. — Macknight, Locke, Clarke.

40. *Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord* (2 Thess. i. 6–10), temporal destruction. — Hammond, Cappe, Gill.

41. *Eternal judgment* (Heb. vi. 2), æonian, or spiritual judgments in this world. — Pearce.

42. *Impossible to renew* (Heb. vi. 4–8). A strong expression for *difficult to renew*. — Macknight, Rosenmüller, Clarke, Calmet.

43. *After this [death] the judgment* (Heb. ix. 27), the ceremonial death, and sentence of judgment pronounced by the high priest. — Cappe.

44. *Judgment without mercy*, severe punishment, not literally without mercy. — Whitby, Grotius.

45. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ?* (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18). If the Christians

barely escaped the calamities of those times, what would become of the rebellious Jews? — Whitby, Lightfoot, Gilpin, Macknight, Calmet.

46. *The fallen angels* (2 Pet. ii. 4-9). A fable in the Book of Enoch, used to illustrate the fate of the Jews. — Gilpin, Pyle.

47. *The destruction of the world* (2 Pet. iii. 7-13). Allegorical description of the destruction of the Jewish dispensation. — Hammond, Witsius, Lightfoot, Wetstein.

48. *Sin unto death* (1 John v. 16). Temporal death is meant. — Beausobre and Lenfant, Horne, Gilpin, Benson.

49. *The vengeance of eternal fire*, the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. — Whitby, Gilpin, Benson, Hammond, Doddridge.

50. *The second death* (Rev. ii. 11; xx. 5, 6), the second overthrow of the Jews. — Hammond, Wetstein, Lightfoot, Rosenmüller.

51. *Wrath of the Lamb* (Rev. vi. 12-17), the overthrow of Jerusalem and Rome. — Hammond, Lightfoot, Townsend, Brownell, Doddridge.

52. *The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever* (Rev. xiv. 9-11), temporal judgments soon to follow for ages of ages. — Hammond, Grotius, Cowles.

53. *The lake that burns with fire and brimstone* (Rev. xxi. 8), destruction in the present life. — Hammond.

It will be seen that nearly all the severest terms employed in what are sometimes called the "Bible threatenings" are explained by the very best and most eminent critics, of all creeds, in harmony with our faith.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE.

THE poets and other writers have been the exponents and promoters of the broadening faith of Christendom; they have in fact gone in advance of the theologians. Even when the Church had but here and there a voice, the poet was singing the new faith; and its prevalence in the pages of the great writers has kept pace with the growth of literature. In the days of darkness, when there was little literature, the air was hostile. The rose of Sharon could not blossom in the chill climate of the mediæval times. Intelligence and philanthropy are the sun and rain by which it germinates and flourishes. While the truth could manage to exist, and feebly appear and reappear, in dark and barbarous epochs, it could only really thrive in an atmosphere of light. Accordingly, though some of the early patristic writers—notably the greatest and best in all the early centuries, Origen (A. D. 180–254)—announced it; though many of the most distinguished scholars of the Middle Ages avowed it; though prominent writers and thinkers of more modern

periods gave it expression; though the mass of German theologians, English Unitarians, and large numbers in the English Establishment and exceptionally prominent men in the English Congregational Church have indulged the "larger hope," it was simultaneously with the rise of modern literature that it advanced as never before. Indeed, it may be said that outside of sectarian literature, in the field of *belles-lettres*, and notably in poetry, there have been few writers of note who have not been *en rapport* with the gospel of eternal hope. If here and there a Pollok has essayed the discordant note of partialism, his voice has been drowned in the harmonious music of the great choir of sweet singers who have chanted the broader faith. Modern literature contains few utterances at variance with the hope of Universal Redemption, while most of the immortal names are identified with its explicit announcement.

John Milton (1612-1662) said that endless punishment questions and blasphemes God's goodness and greatness and leaves them without defence; and his intimate friend, Cromwell's chaplain, Jeremy White, wrote a book defending universal salvation; Bishop Burnet says that Sir Harry Vane (1612-1662) was a Universalist; the great Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) was outspoken on the subject; Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), and Daniel Defoe (1661-1731), author of "Robinson Crusoe," in-

dulged the same hope; Dr. Watts (1674-1748) thought God would listen to the repentant in hell; William Law (1686-1761) taught the "purification of all human nature;" Bishop Butler (1692-1752) concluded that "order and right cannot but prevail finally;" James Thomson (1700-1740) prophesied the period when "one unbounded spring shall encircle all," when "Universal Love" would go on forever, —

"From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression."

Dr. Johnson (1709-1784) declared that "God designs the happiness of all his creatures; and as in the use of means he cannot be mistaken because he is omniscient, so he cannot be defeated, because he is almighty;" Akenside (1721-1770) depicts the day when

"Infinite perfection shall close the scene."

Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813) argued the salvation of all as a necessary consequence of the death of Christ for all; Robert Burns (1759-1796), according to Allan Cunningham, "carried his universal good-will so far as to entertain hopes of universal redemption and the restoration of the doomed spirits to power and lustre," and his poems express the spirit of that divine hope; Joanna Baillie's works (1762-1851) teem with the idea of universal deliver-

ance from evil; Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) looked forward "to the day when tears shall be wiped from all eyes;" Coleridge (1770-1834), John Foster (1770-1843), Wordsworth (1770-1850), Southey (1774-1843), Lamb (1775-1834), Mrs. Sherwood (1775-1851), — all give their testimony to the broadest faith; Moore (1779-1852) sings of the time when God shall his high task

"consummate,
And good from evil, love from hate,
Shall be worked out through sin and pain,
And fate shall loose her iron chain,
And all be free, be bright, again."

Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) declared the fear of endless suffering "the absurdest as well as the most impious of all fears," and said, "If an angel were to tell me to believe in eternal punishment, I would not do it; for it would better become me to believe the angel a delusion than God monstrous." De Quincey (1785-1859), Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (1788-1870), and Southwood Smith (1788-1861) elaborate the doctrine of universal salvation at great length; Byron (1788-1824) prophesies the time when God shall "abolish hell" and bring in a time —

"When man no more shall fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well."

Shelley (1792-1822), Bowring (1792-1872), Bryant (1794-1878), Townshend (1800-1868), Frederika

Bremer (1801-1865), Emerson (1803-1882), Maurice (1806-1872), Longfellow (1807-1882), Whittier (1807-), Holmes (1809-), Tennyson (1809-), Mrs. Browning (1809-1861), Mary Carpenter (1820-), Charles Sumner (1811-1874), Horace Greeley (1811-1872), Thackeray (1811-1863), Mrs. Stowe (1812-), Norman McLeod (1812-1872), Dickens (1812-1870), all explicitly give expression to a universal faith; Robert Browning (1812-) is acknowledged to be "the poet of restoration;" Charles Reade (1814-1884) declares "endless punishment a fable; philosophers always said so, and now even divines have given it up." Bailey (1816-), in "Festus," may be said to have founded one of the greatest of poems on the doctrine of Universal Salvation; the works of the Brontë sisters (1816-1855) overflow with it; Lowell (1819-) sings it; Kingsley (1819-1875) preaches it, so does Stopford Brooke; it glows on almost every page of George Macdonald (1824-), and in the lines of Adelaide Procter (1825-1864) and Dinah Muloch (1826-1887) and Gerald Massey (1828-); it challenges attention in Theodore Winthrop's works (1828-1861), and in Jean Ingelow (1830-); Canon Farrar (1831-), while he does not dogmatize universal salvation, does avow its possibility; Robert Bulwer Lytton (1831-) utters its spirit, while Elizabeth Clephane's "Ninety and Nine" and Bennett's "Sweet By and By" sing the faith into multitudes of hearts; Robert Buchanan (1841-), Mrs. Griswold

(1842-), Florence Nightingale (1820-), the Cary sisters (1820-1871) and multitudes of others unite in the general strain of modern literature. It is literally true that for a hundred years the great writers of England and America have borne testimony to the truth, and have exerted a mighty influence in creating the wonderful change that public opinion has undergone and is now undergoing. English literature has been a powerful ally of those Universalist reformers who a century ago lifted their voices in the wilderness of religious error, and spoke in God's behalf. The progress of thought is a rich commentary on the prophecy of Dr. Benjamin Rush, written in 1791: "At present we wish liberty to the whole world; but the next touch of the celestial magnet upon the human heart will direct it into wishes for the salvation of all mankind."

CHAPTER VII.

TRYING TO STEM THE CURRENT.

ATTEMPTS have been made within a few years, in both the Methodist and Baptist churches and elsewhere, to turn back the hands on the dial of progress by repudiating the fundamental fact of Christianity, the universal Fatherhood of God. It is seen by many, and conceded by some, as the following extracts will show, that the universal Fatherhood necessitates universal salvation.

The Baptist Church officially denies God's universal paternity, so far as that church permits any authoritative statements of its position. In March, 1870, the Chicago "Standard" uttered the sentiment, and when reproached for it the kindly editor not only repudiated it, but denied that the paper had ever taught the heresy. It turned out that while the editor was out of the country, a temporary occupant of the editorial chair, a professor of theology, fulminated the editorial containing the falsehood. This relieved the paper and the editor, at the expense of the church; for if a professor of theology cannot speak as one having authority, who can?

This was the language of the "Standard" in March, 1870:—

"Where, in all the Scriptures, is God ever called the father of all men? Where are all mankind said to be his children? Men need to be born again, in order that they may become the children of God. If they were naturally the children of God, they would naturally be heirs of salvation, according to the apostle's argument (Rom. viii. 17), and would need no new birth to make them so. We regard this plausible assumption of the fatherly attitude of God toward all men, as one of the most unscriptural and mischievous of all prevailing errors."

We had begun to settle down to the pleasing belief that the Baptist Church has concluded to join the other Protestant churches in agreeing that all men are the children of God, when the Cincinnati "Journal and Messenger," the Baptist organ of the great State of Ohio, uttered these identical words, so recently as on April 6th of the blessed year of grace 1881:—

"Among the dangerous theories abroad, and insinuating themselves into the Christian church of to-day, none is more insidious or harmful than that quite commonly taught concerning the divine Fatherhood. Some years ago the idea that God is a universal Father, and that all men are his children by virtue of their creation, was left largely to such men as Edward Irving, and to the Universalists. We do not wonder that a certain church in New York, notable because the late Dr. E. H. Chapin was its pastor, is called the "Church of the Divine Paternity." It is upon their interpretation of the divine Fatherhood that Universalists rest their cause. Granted their theory of the Fatherhood, and Universalism can sustain itself against the world.

"Let it be shown that God stands in the relation of a Father towards man, and beyond a peradventure every soul will finally be saved. God has never cast away his children and has distinctly declared that he will not do so. He has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son. When men can rightfully claim the eternal and omnipotent God as their Father, their future is secure."

Observe these words: *If God is the Father of all men, "Universalism can sustain itself against the world; . . . beyond a peradventure every soul will finally be saved."*

The genealogy of our Lord traces an unbroken chain from Adam down. As truly as Jesus was the Son of God, so were Noah, and Shem, and David; and as all mankind since are children of those named in the genealogy, or of their brothers or sisters, so all mankind are children of God, as certainly as they are children of Adam. The heredity of every man is directly from God, *via* Adam.

But let it not be forgotten that the "Journal and Messenger," and "Standard" claim that only a portion of mankind are the children of God, while the rest of the world are either children of the devil or illegitimate. How many Baptists will agree that this is genuine Christianity?

Our Methodist brethren are falling into the same error, in order to escape the logical result of the universal Fatherhood,—universal holiness and happiness. Will these brethren follow the lead of Bishop Merrill, or will they agree with the indignant

preacher of that church who, when Bishop Merrill occupied the chair of the Conference in Cincinnati, exclaimed, —

“There he sits : he has a sermon two hours long, in which he attempts to prove that mankind are not the children of God, — the most damnable heresy ever uttered !”

Bishop Merrill holds that all children when they are born, are “children of the devil.” He said, in a sermon preached in Manhattan, Kansas, and printed in the “Naturalist” : —

“There is a popular idea that all are born in the image of God. There is no countenance to that doctrine in the Bible. We are in the image of God only after being born into his image. The expression is flippantly used of ‘the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,’ but it is so used as to sap the very foundation of Christianity. The sonship into the family of God is only predicated on our new creation. To be born is to begin to live. In receiving Christ we receive power to become sons of God by being born of God. The new birth is divine ; the life of God in the soul ; become one with Christ ; we are made partakers of the Holy Ghost ; are endowed with that life which is one with Christ. The Fatherhood of God has its foundation in the incarnation of his only-begotten Son. Up to the hour of the new birth we were the children of the devil, but in regeneration is the germ of a new creation, and all the spiritual powers of our being are brought into captivity to Christ. Old things pass away and we are not only in name his children, but we can know that we are sons and daughters of God Almighty.”

Bishop Merrill’s Methodist God is a remarkable specimen. He creates mankind, not in his own image, but in the image of the devil, who is the father

of all souls, and remains their father, and they remain his children until they are born again ! And this, too, in opposition to the plainest declarations of Scripture, which tell us that at the first (Genesis i. 27) " God created man in his own image," and that after the " fall " man did not lose that image (Gen. iii. 22) ; " The man has become as one of us." And certainly as late as the time of the apostle it was said (James iii. 9), " Men are made after the similitude of God." We would like to ask this remarkable bishop if all men are not always under obligation to obey the Saviour, and pray, " Our Father, who art in heaven ; " and if so, would not the great majority of men be worshipping the devil if they called on their Father ; or, if they should address this language to God, would they be believing a lie in supposing they were really addressing their Father ? Or is Bishop Merrill ignorant of what he is talking about ?

And this church declares that baptism revolutionizes the nature, and transforms a child of the devil into a child of God. The Methodist Catechism says : —

" Question, What did your baptism do for you ?

Answer, It made me a child of God."

Notwithstanding this unchristian doctrine is implied in the Methodist Catechism, it must be acknowledged that the Methodist ministry are quite unanimous in preaching the universal Fatherhood

of God. It is one of the inconsistencies of a church never noted for being very logical, but an inconsistency more honorable than following the lead of Bishop Merrill in denying the fundamental fact of Christianity.

Such attempts to sweep back the incoming Atlantic will never be successful, however zealously the theological Dame Partingtons may ply their mops. The doctrine of the Divine Paternity is so deeply inwoven in the texture of human nature that it will assert and vindicate its truthfulness in the instincts and intuitions of the human soul.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THEOLOGICAL TREND.

A CENTURY ago the doctrines enunciated in the prevailing creeds and by their advocates, as given in the foregoing pages, held a sway unquestioned and supreme. Not a pulpit protested; scarcely a word of print adverse to them was being published, when Rely and Murray in England, Purves and Douglas in Scotland, and Murray and Winchester in America, unfurled the banner of universal love. They cast the divine leaven of truth into the world, and from that hour the transformation has been going on. Every day has witnessed progress. The darkness has paled. The light has brightened. When they began their blessed work, nearly every cardinal doctrine of Christianity had been abandoned, and was rejected by all the sects. The universal Fatherhood of God was everywhere ignored. The universal brotherhood of man was rarely asserted. The endless damnation of non-elect infants and of all the heathen, and of the great majority of mankind besides, was everywhere believed; literal fire and brimstone was supposed to be the doom of the wicked; belief in Election and

Reprobation, a substitutional Atonement, and a scheme of general falsehood, as monstrous as it was false, hung like a pall over the Christian world, ate like a cancer into the Christian heart, as it had done for long and cruel centuries.

The old-new gospel — the renaissance of Universalism, the exhumation of Christ's teaching from the grave in which it had been buried — made converts at once, and has continued to win adherents in every period since ; but its influence in modifying the real belief of those whose opinions it has softened and improved has far transcended its progress as a distinct faith. The old denominations retain their written and printed creeds, but their doctrines are abandoned by those who still retain the creeds. They bear the same relation to their former selves that the fossils in a cabinet bear to the living monsters that once prowled and preyed in the primeval seas. It has already come to pass that the members of Limitarian churches think they pay their ministers the highest compliment when they exult that these ministers never preach their creeds ; and they offer their best word for the creed when they declare that no one is expected to believe it.

Occasionally, all along, some wise and far-seeing man has foreseen and prophesied a better day. Those who have adhered to the old creeds have not, perhaps, avowed the sentiment of Rev. Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, who rejoiced that no new idea had ap-

peared in the (Presbyterian) theological school under his charge during the previous fifty years. The saving leaven, the hopeful feature in the Protestant churches, is the idea of progress. More than two and a half centuries ago the key-note was sounded in the well-known passage by John Robinson (Puritan), when the "Mayflower" left Holland for the New World, in an address to the embarking Pilgrims, according to Winslow's narrative :—

"He charged us before God and his blessed angels to follow him no further than he followed Christ, and if God should reveal anything unto us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry ; for he was very confident *the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word.* . . . Here also he put us in mind of our church covenant, at least that part of it whereby we promise and covenant with God and one with another to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written word ; but withal exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare it, and weigh it with other scriptures of truth, before we received it ; 'for,' saith he, 'it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-Christian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.'"

For many years the doctrines of the Puritans were almost everywhere accepted in America ; and long after the distinct announcement of Universalism, there was a "great gulf fixed" between the new faith and the popular church. But at length a voice was here and there lifted up, even among those who still retained their connection with the old order.

expressive of progress. The rigid features began to soften; the stern doctrines began to relax; while the written or printed creed remained unchanged, the actual doctrines preached and believed were better. The iceberg still chilled the air, but the gulf stream of a better faith was dissolving it. Many voices in and out of the pulpit gave testimony that the mediæval horrors were gradually being modified.

Perhaps the initial step of the modern revival of liberal thought was taken by the Episcopal Church in England. The Episcopal Articles of Religion nowhere state the perpetuity of sin and woe. The original number of articles was forty-two instead of thirty-nine, but during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, A. D. 1562, they were reduced, and the forty-second was repealed. It read as follows:—

“All men shall not be saved at the length. Thei also are worthie of condemnation who indeavour at this time to restore the dangerouse opinion that al menne, be thei never so ungodlie, shall at length bee saved, when they have suffered pain for their sinnes a certain time appointed by God's justice.”

It will be observed that this article concedes that universal salvation was once accepted as true, and also withdraws both the denial of the doctrine and the condemnation of those who accept it.

The ecclesiastical courts of England have decided that there is nothing in the formularies that requires

“us to condemn as penal the expression of hope by a clergyman that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked, who are condemned in the day of judgment, may be consonant with the will of God.”

No small influence in producing the improved tone of religious thought on the question of human destiny should be ascribed to the scholarly men who have written and preached in the Episcopal church, particularly in Great Britain.

The first considerable amelioration of ancient public sentiment was seen when theologians began to abandon the idea of literal hell-fire. Wesley said there is no other than material fire, and Spurgeon still teaches the same. But with rare exceptions all the Partialist denominations regard the "worm," the "chains," the "darkness," and the "fire" as emblems of spiritual suffering, remorse. We well remember when, at the age of seven, we returned from the Green Street Congregational Sunday-school, Boston, then under the charge of Rev. Dr. Jenks, telling our parents that there is no fire in hell, but that its torments are horrors of conscience, — such having been the declaration of the Sunday-school teacher in the day's lesson. They were incredulous, such an idea then being entirely novel. But now it is almost universally accepted by the sects that once regarded the abode of the lost as a vast, weltering fire-sea, — a literal lake of flame and sulphur, —

"Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heaped with the damned like pebbles."

A wonderful and most agreeable change has come over "the spirit of the dream," the nightmare rather, of the church. One of its most remarkable changes

has been made in the direction of what may be called the expansion of heaven. For long ages hell was thought to contain the almost infinite majority of mankind, while heaven was to be a little corner, with a mere handful of "elected" saints, whose chief delight would be to exult throughout eternity over their escape from the fate of the rest. The Scotch "saint's" observation illustrates the once prevailing opinion. Said his friend, "In the population of Edinboro [then 30,000] about how many, Sandy, do you think are elected to final salvation?" "Weel," said he, "I think nae mair nor ma brither Robin and mysel' — and I am na quite sure about Robin!" But for a century past the proportions have been continually changing. If one could represent the former idea by a diagram, he might draw an immense triangle to represent the lost, side by side with an exceedingly minute one to denote the saved. But now the classes have exchanged places, and an immense triangle continually expanding would denote heaven, in the popular apprehension, and an almost invisible and vanishing one — "small by degrees and beautifully less" — would represent hell. Rev. Dr. Meredith, in Tremont Temple, Boston, in 1886, voiced the prevalent sentiment of the Partialist church, when he said, —

"It used to be the common belief that but a very few choice sort of folks were going to be saved, while the great multitude of the race were going to be damned forever; but I believe that

in the great winding up of things the proportion of the lost to the saved will be as large as the proportion of men in the State Prison is to the population of the State," —

a sentiment long before uttered by Lyman Beecher.

In order to get this great number into heaven, however, it has become necessary to count in all the heathen, and all who die in infancy. But it is a fact that the average believer is now satisfied if you will only damn a very few for him.

Among the most conspicuous of those who seem to have foreseen and aided in the improvement that has blessed Christian thought is the "Beecher family." Henry Ward Beecher is popularly supposed to have originated the mitigation of the temperature of modern orthodoxy; but his father, Lyman Beecher (Congregational), really long preceded him in the path the more brilliant son followed; while his sister Catharine made the first family-break out of the old ceremonies into the newer life. She says, in her "Common Sense Applied to Religion": —

"I was taught to look at God as a great 'moral Governor' whose chief interest was 'to sustain his law.' Then there seemed to be two kinds of right and wrong, the 'common' and the 'evangelical.' According to this distinction, I could not feel or do anything that was right or acceptable to God till my birth-gift of a depraved heart was renewed by a special divine interposition (p.16)."

Losing her betrothed, she describes her terrible travail of mind until she emerged into the light of a broader and serener faith.

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, in speaking of the death of his sister, Catherine, told the romance of her early life. When Miss Beecher was twenty-two years old, she was engaged to be married to Professor Fisher, of Yale College. Professor Fisher, on a voyage to Europe, was drowned, and according to Mr. Beecher, this death worked a complete revolution in his sister's character. She broke away from the faith of her father, and, adopting liberal views, gave her whole life for the benefit of others. How often has her experience been repeated. How many in the day of trial have found a partial and limited faith insufficient, and have abandoned it for the "eternal hope" of the gospel.

Dr. Edward Beecher (Congregational), a ripe scholar, and in full fellowship with his church, makes the following statements:—

"In the law of Moses, taken as a law, a rule of life, individual and national, there is not one motive derived from a future state and its retributions. All is derived from this world and the present life. The same also is true of the Patriarchal dispensation and of the world before the flood."¹

He thus not only admits that the doctrine of endless punishment was not revealed in the Old Testament, but he proceeds to say that Universalism was the prevailing sentiment among Christians in the early centuries:—

"What, then, was the state of the facts as to the leading theological schools of the Christian world in the age of Origen, and

¹ Hist. Script. Ret. p. 4.

some centuries after? It was in brief thus: There were at least six theological schools in the church at large; of these six schools, one, and only one, was decidedly and earnestly in favor of the doctrine of future eternal punishment. One was in favor of the annihilation of the wicked. Two were in favor of the doctrine of universal restoration on the principles of Origen, and two in favor of universal restoration on the principles of Theodore of Mopsuestia."¹

And as an historian he affirms that the Puritan doctrines were not invented till more than five hundred years after Christ: —

"The modern Orthodox views of eternal punishment, as opposed to final restoration, were not fully developed and established till the middle of the sixth century, and then they were not established by thorough argument, but by imperial authority."²

The great popular leader who has conducted his brethren from Egypt to Canaan is Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (Congregational). It is impossible to quote a tithe of what he has said on this theme, but here are a few characteristic utterances. Though not a Universalist, but in his last years inclined to believe that those who cannot be saved, if any, will be annihilated, he is as explicit as any Universalist can be in repudiating false doctrines. He says, —

"I believe in a future state of retribution, but I believe it is remedial. What the end will be I do not know, for I can't see the beginning; but that punishment will continue after it can no longer do good, or that it will be made everlasting, I do not believe. God do so to me, and more, if ever I preach that or

¹ Hist. Script. Ret. p. 189.

² Ibid. p. 246.

countenance it in any way whatever. For God's own sake, for the sake of everything that reason, conscience, and benevolence justifies, I would clear God's skirts of every such aspersion. Punishment, so long as it continues to do good ; then annihilation, if you believe it ; but eternal punishment, never ! ”

In December, 1886, he said, —

“ If you tell me that they [sinners] have gone to hell, then I swear by the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have sworn to worship forever, that you will make an infidel of me. The doctrine that God has been for thousands of years peopling this earth with human beings, during a period three-fourths of which was not illuminated by an altar or a church, and in places where a vast population of those people are yet without that light, is to transform the Almighty into a monster more hideous than Satan himself ; and I swear by all that is sacred that I will never worship Satan, though he should appear dressed in royal robes and seated on the throne of Jehovah. Men may say, ‘ You will not go to heaven. ’ A heaven presided over by such a demon as that, who has been peopling this world with millions of human beings and then sweeping them off into hell, not like dead flies, but without taking the trouble even to kill them, and gloating and laughing over their eternal misery, is not such a heaven as I want to go to. The doctrine is too horrible. I cannot believe it, and I won't. They say the saints in heaven are so happy that they do not mind the torments of the damned in hell ; but what sort of saints must they be who could be happy while looking down upon the horrors of the bottomless pit ? They don't mind — they're safe ; they're happy. What would the mother think of the sixteen-year daughter who, when her infant was lying dead in the house, should come dancing and singing into the parlor and exclaim : ‘ Oh ! I'm so happy, mother, I don't care for the dead baby in the coffin ! ’ Would she not be shocked ? And so with this doctrine. And by the blood of Christ, I denounce it ; by the wounds in His hands and His side, I abhor it ; by His groans and agony, I abhor and denounce it as the most hideous nightmare of theology.”

Such sentiments as these were frequently uttered by Mr. Beecher during his later years, till his death in 1887.

Mrs. H. B. Stowe, still another member of this extraordinary family, epitomizes the Universalist faith when she says, "EVERYTHING THAT OUGHT TO HAPPEN WILL HAPPEN!" Her novels are instinct with the spirit of the Universalist faith.

Speaking of the late Henry Ward Beecher, soon after his death, the editor of the "Christian Union," Dr. Lyman Abbott, says: —

"My debt to Mr. Beecher is greater than to any other man, living or dead, excepting only my father. Like many a son of New England I began my Christian life with faith in a God who is just, belief in a law which is inexorable, and a submission to the primacy of a conscience, absolute but not infallible. From Mr. Beecher I learned that God is love, that law is redemption, and that love, not conscience, is the soul's primate. Who that has learned this lesson can ever forget it, or look with other than reverent affection on the teacher from whom he learned it? Mr. Beecher has rendered his generation many a great service, — political, moral, social, and theological; but his greatest service is in this, that *he has taught the Puritan Church that God is love, that law is love, that life is love; that love is all and in all.*"

Commenting on this confession, Rev. T. J. Sawyer, D. D., says in the "Christian Leader," —

"I call this a remarkable confession. Might it not be called amazing? Here is Dr. Abbott, with the New Testament in his hands from his youth up, with the best education New England institutions could give him, and yet he never learned that 'God is love' till Mr. Beecher — who was himself rather late in learn-

ing this great primal truth of the gospel — taught him ! And what makes the case the more remarkable is the fact that in New England for more than a century there has been a denomination of Christians, not large nor learned, it is true, but respectable, which, if it had any vocation or has been doing any work, has been steadily and sometimes eloquently proclaiming, amidst no little obloquy and opposition the very truth which Dr. Abbott now holds so important and prizes so high ! And where, pray, did Mr. Beecher learn this precious truth ? Not under his father's roof, nor from any New England college or theological school, nor from 'the Puritan Church ;' and he was hardly the man to strike out a new truth of this nature himself. With all his wonderful power to use what others had thought and done, and to adorn and give life and grace to whatever he touched, his mind was not creative ; but it was one of the elements of his greatness that he was not altogether ashamed to learn from those whom the great church of which he was a member, thought it orthodox wisdom to despise. Yet I might safely challenge Dr. Abbott to point out a single improvement made by Mr. Beecher in the prevalent Orthodoxy of the day, or one of its errors and enormities which he rejected, in which Universalists did not precede him by half a century. . . . Perhaps Progressive Orthodoxy may be one of its fruits, though here, as Dr. Dexter wittily said, and Joseph Cook repeated, 'Professor Smyth's new light is nothing but John Murray's old darkness.' "

One of the most significant signs of the times is seen in the condition of things in and around Andover, Mass. The creed of that institution is published on page 13. Professor Moses Stuart (Congregational) once said, —

" If a professor has common honesty, he can never subscribe to the creed unless he really believe it. If he assents to this creed and then inculcates principles contrary to it, he surely is not a man who ought to be retained in any important post of the church."

In 1844, the Visitors in reporting to the Trustees, saw occasion to say, —

“If in the progress of time any officer of this institution should adopt and teach opinions and doctrines inconsistent with those of the donors, as clearly expressed in their declarations and creeds, it would be requiring of him the exercise of the principles of common honesty only that he should resign. Self-respect, if no higher principle, it is to be presumed, would induce him to do it.”

The “*Congregationalist*” quotes from an appendix of the correspondence which led to the founding of the seminary, to the effect that the founders —

“were strict Calvinists, who would admit of no novel speculations ; but, as the oldest of them expressed it, ‘they wished for Calvinism up to the hub.’”

In giving his reasons for resigning his professorship in Andover, Professor F. H. Thayer (*Congregational*) says, —

“The statutes of the Seminary require a rigid assent to the letter of the creed on the part of all persons subscribing it ; the Boards of Administration, however, accept a general and approximate belief in the doctrines of the creed as the sufficient pre-requisite to the subscription. But the honesty of such general and approximate subscription has of late been publicly and extensively called in question ; yet the trustees are disinclined publicly to acknowledge and vindicate it. To remain in my office, therefore, would be to remain constantly exposed to the charge, or the suspicion, of dishonesty, without prospect of open vindication, and with the certainty that whatever I might say in my own defence would be largely neutralized.”

And yet the Boston "Congregationalist" says: —

"In common with all friends of Andover, we greatly regret that Professor Thayer should feel obliged to resign, although the spirit of his action is most honorable in him."

In other words, the "Congregationalist" regrets that Professor Thayer is an honest man.

Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth (Congregational) accepted a call to an Andover professorship, though he did not believe in the declarations of the document he signed; referring to which Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon (Congregational) said in the "North American Review," —

"If Dr. Newman Smyth had said after examining the Andover creed, 'Before I will write one letter of my name at the end of that document, I will see your endowments perish with you,' he would have done more for the church of Christ in America than by a long lifetime of successful theological lecturing."

Prof. David Swing thus humorously and truthfully deals with the Andover attitude. It well illustrates the facing-both-ways position of many of those who let "I dare not" wait upon "I would": —

"The Andover creed says: 'I believe that the wicked will awake to shame and everlasting contempt, and with devils be plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever.' 'I understand,' said President Seelye, 'that when you say eternal hope, you mean everlasting damnation?' 'I do.' 'And when you say disciplinary processes, you mean fire and brimstone?' 'I do.' 'Well, then, I am compelled to say, as a gentleman, that your orthodoxy is sound, but as one of the Andover visitors, to say that you are unfit to teach

theology, for your flowery language might mislead some of the weak-minded boys.'"

An amusing episode in the onward course of the Congregational church is the conduct of Flavius Josephus Cook, the Boston "Monday Lecturer." He is struggling hard to maintain ancient Orthodoxy, and open the door of opportunity a little wider, and he makes the astonishing statement that between the time when the breath leaves the body and the moment when the soul takes its flight, a sinner may have an opportunity for repentance, forgiveness, and salvation. He prefaces this statement with the inconsistent remark, "Give me no guess for a dying pillow." And yet his theory is that in the very instant of death conscience may be preternaturally enlightened, and while the soul is passing from the body—it may be after the breath, but before the soul has left the body—"the mighty light which comes in the last and highest moment of spiritual experience before death ends may have been enough to bring many a man who gave no visible sign of repentance into loyalty to God."

This might well be called the latest dodge; Mr. Cook is terribly opposed to a second probation, but he argues that just at death, between apparent and real death, there is a great quickening of the spiritual faculties, and at that moment the destiny of many a man is decided, and he repents at the last gasp. A writer in the "Christian at Work" describes

Mr. Cook's theory as that "of the soul playing hide and seek in a man's body for an indefinite period after he is dead and buried." There seems to be about a quarter of a second between Mr. Cook and the average Orthodox theologian. The more these tinkers work, the worse the old creed leaks. Once it was a tolerable porringer, to feed hungry souls from, now it is chiefly used as a colander with which to strain out gnats. The New Orthodoxy says, "Probation after death." Some wit says Mr. Cook amends by saying, "Probation after breath." Mr. Cook, however, must not claim this subterfuge. Père Ravignan said, many years ago:—

"What God does for the soul when the eye is turned up in death and shrouded, the frame stiffened, every limb motionless, every power of expression gone, is one of the secrets of the Divine compassion."¹

In 1870, according to the Boston "Congregationalist,"—

"The Second Congregational Church at Chicopee, Mass., the Rev. J. T. Tucker, pastor, adopted the course of retaining its old articles of faith in full, with Scripture proofs, etc., while no longer using them as a form of admission, nor yet insisting on an unqualified assent to them and all of them, as a condition precedent to church-membership. They are retained as showing the historical genesis of the church, as testifying its present belief, and as furnishing a guide in the examination of its candidates for communion. It is quite possible that the event may reveal in this expedient a wise and useful remedy for a widely confessed

¹ From Dr. Pusey's "What is of Faith."

want, — to hold firmly the creed of our fathers as against innovators, while so holding it as not to exclude sincere doubters on points which are not deemed vital to Christian character."

In harmony with the foregoing the Chicago "Advance" (Congregational) says that "*the sovereignty* of the Westminster Catechism" is at an end among Congregationalists, but that "*the truths* which that remarkable compend of Christian doctrine embodied are still, for the most part, firmly believed."

This paper, in 1870, found it necessary to assume, contrary to the "standards" which it says are "firmly believed," that all infants will be saved. Only thus could it make out a happy immortality for the majority of mankind. This is its language: —

"Our readers will not doubt the salvation of those who die in infancy and early childhood. But in granting this, the salvation of the majority of the human race is at once conceded; for more than half of all who are born die thus prematurely, — a fact which lightens greatly the darkness of the past, and especially of the heathen world, where infant life so commonly goes to waste.

"The Bible takes no gloomy view of the human race as such. As a race it will be saved! The lost will be the exception and not the rule. Dr. Schaff well remarks, in his additions to Lange on Romans, that 'from the great stress which Paul lays on the superabundance of grace, which greatly exceeds the evils of the fall, we have a right to infer that by far the greater part of the race will ultimately be saved.' And Dr. Hodge, the personification of Puritan theology, than whom no one will be considered more orthodox, in his commentary on the same epistle, uses this emphatic language: 'We have reasons to believe that the lost shall bear to the saved no greater proportion than the inmates

of a prison do to the mass of the community.' Such is our own faith, and we cannot consent to belie Scripture, to dim the glory of the Redeemer, or to play into the hands of adversaries who delight to malign Orthodoxy, by teaching that the great mass of mankind, for whom Christ died, will forever perish. The prison convicts shall not out-number the holy, nor the census of hell exceed that of heaven !"

Illustrative of the Congregational tendency, says a correspondent of the "New York Independent": —

"It is becoming more and more impossible to hold the enlightened Christian public to those views of future misery endlessly perpetuated which formerly obtained, which our fathers brought with them out of the Papal Church, and which are still found in the creeds of both Papal and Protestant churches alike. And yet those who honestly accept the testimony of the Scriptures cannot accept the doctrine of the final salvation of all men, and to many there seems to be no middle ground. This doctrine of immortality in sin and misery is discarded by an increasing number of our Christian brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, and that of a belief in the conditional immortality of man has taken its place; and some of the most eminent English preachers, well known and honored in this country, are of this way of thinking. In this country, too, a spirit of inquiry has been awakened among thinking men that cannot longer be suppressed."

But to one who would "deal" with such of the brethren as indulge the larger hope, the same paper said, in 1878: —

"We can tell it that, if it must enter on this crusade, it will find a very large portion of the ministry arrayed against it. We can tell it that not a few of the noblest men in the pastorate and among the presidents and professors of our colleges and theological seminaries will refuse to follow it in this war against the brethren."

The Boston "Congregationalist" undertook on a time to ascertain the views of leading ministers, and received the following among the replies : —

"I know of no Congregational church in which our doctrine as anciently interpreted, concerning the state of unforgiven sinners after death, is not largely modified so as to accommodate it more nearly to human feeling, — not in the published church creed so much, but in the private thinking of the members, and in the examination of candidates for admission to the church."

"There has been in late years a noticeable departure from the former faith on the part of our ministers. Without inclining, so far as I am aware, to Restorationism, many of them do not accept the endlessness of future punishment. Some favor the doctrine of the ultimate extinction of the wicked, and others leave the question open. There is a quiet dissent from the old teachings in my own church, and in other churches."

"If a preacher is Christlike, and shows in his life the fruits of the Spirit, if he give good evidence of thorough piety, I would not exclude him from our ministry if he believes in the annihilation of the wicked, or the ultimate restoration of all."

"There is also manifestly a feeling that if it should appear in the hereafter that God can by any means, not now revealed, save those who die in unbelief, it will be an occasion of great joy."

"The whole system of theology is undergoing modification of statement and of thought ; and this doctrine of Future Punishment in the new adjustment does not hold just the place it did in the old system."

"There has certainly been a change in the views of the members of our churches upon the doctrine in question. Less relative prominence is given it than formerly. Where positively held, it is asserted with a different tone, showing that it is held as an awful and inscrutable mystery."

"There are many restorationists, some annihilationists, many doubtful and confused."

“If Dr. Dale (Annihilationist), or George MacDonald (Restorationist), or Christlieb (who leaves this as an open question), knocked at the doors, my church would welcome them to membership, and ordain them to the ministry. *Belief in eternal damnation is not enough to make a good minister, nor peculiar views about it enough to spoil one.*”

In the installation of Rev. Dr. Whiton in Newark, N. J., the candidate declared that —

“ ‘propitiation’ is heathenish ; that God’s relations and feelings toward the sinner are not affected by the atonement, but only the sinner’s relation toward God ; and that ultimately all beings would be reconciled to God, and there would no longer be sin or rebellion in the universe.”

The “ Christian Union ” thinks that the whole significance of the Newark Council is briefly this : that the Congregationalists of Eastern New Jersey do not think that a modest uncertainty respecting the future state, on the part of a religious teacher whose Christian piety and scholarship are unquestioned, constitutes any reason for refusing him the right hand of fellowship in his Christian work, or any ground for advising the church not to accept him as its teacher. Dr. Whiton was installed. His triumph over the opposition against him demonstrates that the dogmas of Probation and of Endless Punishment no longer hold a vital place in the creed of Orthodox Congregationalism. They are indeed in the creed, but they are not essential to it.

Prominent among the leaders of “ New Orthodoxy ” are Drs. Whiton, Northrup, Gladden, Munger,

Newman and Egbert Smyth, and Merriam in this country, — all Congregationalists, — and George MacDonald (Episcopal), in England. We have quoted Dr. Whiton, and briefly cite some of the others. Mr. Merriam, in a letter to the “National Baptist,” Philadelphia, said : —

“I believe the oft-quoted ‘proof-texts,’ on the subject of everlasting punishment are inconclusive. They certainly teach a future punishment, and appeal to the fear of it. But it seems to me the whole logic and spirit of Biblical truth forbid the idea that all who die impenitent will suffer an eternity of conscious misery. I believe the Bible would teach us that God’s character is always patient, compassionate, and, toward the repentant, forgiving. Of course I believe in an extent of punishment commensurate with the duration of sin.”

Rev. T. T. Munger, D. D. : —

“I would rather, with Tennyson, ‘trust the larger hope’ that in some way ‘good shall be the final goal of ill’ than prescribe how it shall be reached. The annihilation of the wicked strikes me as an error of the gravest character — impugning as it does the fact of human immortality. The theory of final, universal restoration does not seem to me necessarily to conflict with a thorough and sincere enforcement of the gospel ; but the theory of annihilation so cuts under the whole philosophy of man and the gospel, that I cannot conceive how it can be held without fatally weakening the entire system. . . . To deny that God would receive a penitent from whatever depths of hell he might look up would simply be to lose my God. I utterly reject the opinion that the great masses of mankind are subjected to endless pains in the future world. I have no belief in inflicted punishment, save as it comes through the laws inherent in our nature and conduct. I feel no hesitation in saying that if at any

time, in any world, a sinner turn to God, God will have mercy upon him. I do not believe in the exhaustion of infinite mercy, — a mercy that endureth forever.”

The “Christian Union” contained an account of the installation of Dr. Munger over a Congregational church at New Haven, by a vote of twenty-four to six, after a protracted examination, and said editorially: —

“On what grounds the dissenting votes were cast, we are not told; probably on the ground of Mr. Munger’s views respecting future punishment, expressed in the declaration that judgment is a continuous process, is merciful, not doom-like, being a gracious separation between good and evil, and that heaven is oneness with God, and that hell is separation from God. In reply to the question, ‘Do you believe that all men will ultimately be saved?’ he replied, ‘I pray so, and I hope so;’ but to a second question he added, ‘I certainly do not hold out any hopes to a man that his future life will be different from what his life on earth leads us to expect that it will be.’”

Mr. Munger prays for the ultimate salvation of all, and places himself on record as *hoping* for it. This is as far as the New Theology will go. And a Congregational council decides that this hope, cherished in accordance with prayer, is no bar to its fellowship, and installs a pastor who entertains this hope. If Mr. Munger cannot pray in faith for the salvation of all, he is permitted to pray in hope, and both prayer and hope to this end are endorsed as legitimate in a Congregational pastor

Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden, in 1879, said : —

"No man is 'evangelical,' say these American censors, who doubts the endlessness of future punishment, — no matter how much else he may believe. But the English Congregationalists with one voice declare that to deny the name 'evangelical' to a man simply because he does not believe this dogma, is absurd. The Rev. Dr. Kennedy, of London, one of the most scholarly and conservative of the English Congregationalists, recently published a long article in the 'Congregationalist,' in which he showed that *a large share of the English Congregational ministers, and the ablest among them, do reject, without hesitation, the doctrine of endless punishment.* Some of them believe in the final extinction of the wicked; others hold Canon Farrar's doctrine of 'eternal hope.'"

Occasionally a belated theologian has not discovered the nineteenth century. Such a man seems to be the Rev. Dr. W. T. Shedd (Presbyterian), who said as lately as 1883 : —

"I certainly teach that infants 'are unholy, sinful, and morally unclean,' but I do not teach that 'there is no warrant in the Scripture for believing that such children can be saved.' On the contrary, I quote Scripture to prove these two positions: (1) That there is an explicit assertion in the Divine Word that all infants of believers are saved by the washing of regeneration; (2) That there is reason from the Divine Word for both hoping and believing that all other infants are saved by the same method, although the texts are not so explicit."

When, in 1887, the year of the famous letters from Orthodox clergymen as to the status of "evangelical" doctrines among ministers and churches, Washington Gladden predicted that within twenty-five years Congregationalists would be substantially Universal-

ists, the "Congregationalist" took on dreadfully, saying : —

"It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest, and if the fact were so, one might have hoped that a loyal son would tenderly cover, rather than rudely unveil, the nakedness of his fathers."

George MacDonald, then a Congregationalist, now of the Episcopal church, in "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," harmonizes with Whittier's words, "Could heaven itself be heaven, and look unmoved on hell?" He says : —

"When once to a man the human face is the human face divine, and the hand of his neighbor is the hand of a brother, then will he understand what Saint Paul meant when he said, 'I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren.' . . . Saint Paul would be wretched before the throne of God if he thought there was one man beyond the pale of his mercy ; and that as much for God's glory as for man's sake. And what shall we say of the man Christ Jesus ? Who that loves his brother would not, upheld by the love of Christ, and with a dim hope that in the far-off time there might be some help for him, arise from the company of the blessed, and walk down into the dismal regions of despair, to sit with the last, the only unredeemed, the Judas of his race, and be himself more blessed in the pains of hell than in the glories of heaven ? Who in the midst of the golden harps and white wings, knowing that one of his kind, one miserable brother in the old-world time when men were taught to love their neighbor as themselves, was howling unheeded far below in the vaults of the creation, — who, I say, would not feel that he must arise, that he had no choice, that awful as it was, he must gird his loins, and go down into the smoke and the darkness and the fire, travelling the weary and fearful road into the country to find his brother ? — who, I mean, that had the mind of Christ, that had the love of the Father ?"

It will be seen by the foregoing extracts that the Congregationalists have risen immensely above the Puritan horrors of Saybrook and Andover. Proceed step by step from older to newer of the organized churches of this sect, and there is steady progress from darkness to light. The creed of each new church is less savage than the one framed the year before; and in any city in the land where there are two Congregational churches it is usually found that the later is not only the more liberal, but also the more popular. It would not be difficult to gauge the age of any Congregational church by the creed it professes; the younger it is, the nearer it has approached to our platform. In the geology of theology, the monsters are found in the oldest strata. The nearer we come to our own epoch, the more religious opinions resemble our own.

President Gregory in a recent baccalaureate sermon said, according to the "Homiletic Monthly":—

"Paley defines virtue as doing good in obedience to the will of God for the sake of everlasting happiness. As organized by Paley, and connected so closely with our modern Christianity, it is the scheme of everlasting selfishness and hypocrisy that has cursed Christendom for a century."

Bishop Foster (Methodist), after giving the statistics of paganism, remarks, —

"If the awful thought could once take possession of my mind that the whole heathen world must, of necessity, be lost forever, simply because they are heathen, I would not send them a gospel

which reveals such a God. That grim thought alone would shut out all hope for the world, and make eternity itself a dungeon, no difference who might be saved. For how could any rational creature enjoy heaven with a God whose government could permit such a stain of shame and dishonor, of cruelty and injustice?"

The "Christian Union," in December, 1877, admitted that the doctrine that —

" 'The wicked are cast into eternal torments' is no longer preached by any Orthodox ministers of note, and would hardly be listened to by any Orthodox congregation. No minister of to-day probably could bring himself to preach Jonathan Edwards's sermon, 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,' and certainly no church of to-day could bring itself to hear it. Mr. Moody may be regarded as a not excessively progressive preacher of the Orthodox faith, and his one sermon on future punishment, on 'Son, remember,' contains no hint of any other torment than that which memory inflicts upon the soul that has lost its opportunity. Joseph Cook is a fair representative of modern Orthodoxy, and there is no smell of brimstone in his argument for future penalty, — a penalty purely self-inflicted. The vision of an eternal inquisition, presided over by an omnipotent Torquemada, no longer haunts the Christian pulpit."

Dr. Fairbairn (Presbyterian), in his "Studies of the Life of Christ," remarks: —

"Judas despairful is a better man than Judas respectable had been; and if his remorse has touched the heart of man into pity, who shall say that it found or made severe and pitiless the heart of God?"

Remembering the warm-hearted men and women of the Methodist Church, we are not surprised to find Dr. Whedon, of the Methodist "Quarterly,"

saying that there is a class of loving, pure-hearted Christians, "in other respects orthodox, to whom such a retribution [a 'hell of inexpressible torment'] is utterly unthinkable;" and that this class is steadily increasing, and beginning to speak out boldly, and make itself felt in all that pertains to creeds and the conditions of Christian fellowship. It would seem, even from the revelations of the last few months, as if the time was near, prophesied years ago by an eminent divine, when there would be a "great landslide into Universalism."

Notwithstanding its brave professions of remaining unmoved, it is true, even of that rigid communion the Baptist, as Galileo said it was of the earth, *E pur si muove*,—"it does move for all that;" and if its leaders continue to hold the old doctrines without proclaiming them, except semi-occasionally, the motive will ere long be most apparent.

In February, 1881, the Chicago "Standard" (Baptist) defined its idea of God's fatherhood thus, — and its definition is accurate:—

"The clearest explanation of God's paternal relation to the world as obdurate and as redeemed is to be gained by a perusal of the parable of the Prodigal Son. That erring youth was far from the enjoyment of filial blessings in his far country, but he was a son in a true sense still, both in the eye of the waiting father and deep down in the hearty convictions of the young man himself."

This is a great improvement on the position of the "Standard," that God is not the Father of all

men, or of any, until they are spiritually regenerated. (See p. 86.)

In the kindness of its heart the "Standard" denies the allegation sometimes made, that Universalism is pleasing to the unregenerate. It said in February, 1870: —

"To men who have become involved in the toils of sin, who have felt its power and its bondage, there is very little inspiring in the creed which only tantalizes them with the reflection that 'holiness and happiness are inseparably connected,' and finds for them no way of escape in this life. The only prospect held out is that God will 'finally restore the whole human family to holiness and happiness;' but now and for an indefinite time in the future those sold unto sin must continue in its bondage."

But while this body of Christian believers still affects to hold the old ideas, it escapes being an entire anachronism in this age by not preaching them! This is our inference from the subjoined paragraph from the Chicago "Standard": —

"The testimony of our own experience and observation is, that there is no doctrinal subject upon which ministers preach so seldom as this, and none so infrequently discussed by the religious press, — at least the Orthodox press."

Just before these pages were put to press Mr. Spurgeon withdrew from the Baptist Union because his brethren were so generally drifting — rising, rather — to better views of God and human destiny. And still later, in 1888, Rev. Henry C. Graves, of New Bedford, Mass., quotes the opinion of "a

clergyman of acknowledged authority on religious tendencies in England," that a majority of the ministers among the "Independents" or Congregationalists of England "hold to the theory of the final restoration of those who may be punished in the future life. In a word, universal salvation is the destiny of the human race."

In 1878, Rev. C. H. Richards (Congregational), of Madison, Wisconsin, said, —

"My church believes in inevitable retribution for sin, and that the everlastingly incorrigible will suffer everlastingly. But it 'looks for more light to break forth from God's Word' upon this law of retribution. It knows the best Christian scholars differ about the meaning of important texts, and wants them simply to discover the real truth of Scripture. It would not stultify itself by demanding in advance that they arrive at its present conclusions, or be turned out of its fellowship. If Dr. Dale (Annihilationist), or George MacDonald (Restorationist), or Christlieb (who leaves this an open question) knocked at its doors, it would welcome them to membership, and ordain them to the ministry. Belief in eternal damnation is not enough to make a good minister, nor peculiar views about it enough to spoil one. Other elements should be decisive. If the candidate be clearly a 'man of God' by character, fitness, power to help men heavenward, clearly 'called of the Lord' to preach, no council should withhold its hands. If his spiritual life and spiritual success show that God wants him in the work, it is a sin against the 'Holy Ghost' to prevent him. No gag-law is needed in the kingdom of heaven. There is no more danger from errors on this point than from the Plymouth Brethrenism of Moody, or the fatalism of Hodge. Congregationalism will not suffer half so much from 'inconsistency' as from silencing a true prophet of God."

Professor J. L. Diman, of Brown University, "Orthodox Congregationalist," in a sermon at King's Chapel, Boston, in 1878, is reported : —

"I affirm that there is no warrant whatever for erecting the bald, literal dogma of everlasting punishment into an article of the Christian faith ; that a grievous wrong is done when any who shrink from accepting it are excluded from the communion of Christian people ; and that the religious body which insists on this as an essential test will inevitably bar from its ministry many of the most faithful and the most conscientious of the present generation. Those who affirm it affirm what Jesus himself made no part of his direct and explicit teaching ; and where he was silent we well may pause."

The "New York Sun" pronounces the controversy on human destiny "the live theological issue of the hour ;" and is amazed to find that so many "who were but lately among the pillars of Orthodoxy, have turned against the ancient creed of damnation." It further says that "the investigations recently made by a religious paper show that notions heretofore considered heretical respecting eternal torment are tolerated among the clergy of the Congregational denomination."

The "New York Herald" says editorially : —

"The idea of eternal punishment for sins committed in a limited period of time is to very many thinking persons illogical and abhorrent, and various devices have been found for getting around it, if not of utterly ignoring it. It is very evident that Universalism is spreading itself very slowly but very surely among all the denominations. It is also very clear that the time is coming when the creeds of Christendom must be revised in this particular."

And to the astonishment of the theological and literary conservatives, even the stately and dignified "North American Review" lately entered upon the discussion, giving six exhaustive articles on the question, by as many eminent divines, including the presentation of the Universalist argument by Rev. Dr. T. J. Sawyer.

Commenting on these investigations and disclosures, the "Herald and Presbyter," says, —

"It is manifest to all close observers that a change has been gradually occurring for a number of years past, chiefly in the views of Congregationalists, though not confined to them, in regard to the duration of future punishment for the finally impenitent."

The "New York Sun," says, —

"The truth is, *Universalism is becoming a part of Orthodoxy*; and when Orthodox ministers join in the exercises at Dr. Chapin's funeral they will not need to indulge in apology for their conduct. So far as concerns the doctrine which nominally separated the dead clergyman and orator from them, they are in substantial agreement with his views. They have given up hell as it was formerly preached, and their churches are filled with Universalists."

Rev. Dr. Pond, of Bangor, Me. (Congregational), wrote to the "Advance," in 1880: —

"I regret to notice a disposition in some places to fraternize with Universalists. Some advocate an exchange of pulpits with them, receiving them to our churches, and their being licensed and even ordained to the ministry. Some indulge in modifications and explanations which go to diminish the difference

between these two classes of Christians, and bring them nearer together. This is a new phase in our religious history, introduced probably from Germany ; for the eternity of future punishment is commonly denied there, and is held very loosely even by evangelical Christians."

Rev. Dr. Chapin once told a Charlestown audience that "the doctrine of eternal punishment, as preached by Joseph Cook, bears about the same relation to the old Orthodox doctrine as does the domestic cat to the aboriginal tiger." And yet, though the old ship "Orthodoxy" has drifted so far from its ancient harbor, it has not yet found the new. It has no chart, rudder, or port of destination. It is forever beating around Cape Point-no-point. When the Boston Platform was adopted by the Congregationalists, — which, as the result showed, had no binding force, — Professor Park of Andover said : —

"It is altogether too indecisive with regard to those great truths which the historic creeds of the Congregationalists have been designed to maintain. I cannot regard the spirit of the new creed as adapted to meet the needs of the present age. It seems to portend a decline in doctrinal preaching and in missionary zeal. In my opinion, the general acceptance of the creed as a denominational standard would be a calamity."

But in 1879 Rev. Dr. Bacon (Congregational) wrote to the "Independent" as to what the denomination needs. He showed very decidedly that this incohesive aggregation of independent churches is fast following the Unitarians *en route* to dissolution. He remarks : —

"The Cambridge Platform of 1646 began to be obsolete before the men who made it were in their graves. Nobody recognizes it as a constitution or a body of rules for any organization. Yet the authority, feeble as it may be, of that old document, is not less — is, perhaps, greater — to-day than the authority of the Boston Platform of 1865. Doubtless that also, being nearly fourteen years of age, is beginning to be obsolete without beginning to be venerable. Its authors tell us expressly 'that the National Council at Boston had no legislative power to ordain a new constitution for the churches, or to promulgate any new rules, and no judicial power to establish precedents which inferior courts must follow.' They tell us, 'All that such a council can do is to inquire, to deliberate, and to testify.' No church, then, is bound to be governed by either of those platforms, or by both of them. No church can be disowned for disregarding them."

The frequent expressions of opinion on the part of Congregational clergymen show pretty conclusively that this body resembles the quack's description of his medicine. He said it was a "heterogeneous conglomeration of discordant materials."

In a lecture to the theological students of Andover Seminary, Professor G. T. Ladd (Congregational) thus explained Congregationalism: —

"It is hard to define; a concrete, clear-cut definition is likely to be too narrow; we must study its germinant ideas and fundamental principles. Again, what will Congregationalism turn out to be? What will come by development? Here again we must study its germinant principles, in order to separate its accidental from its necessary elements. We must analyze it into its constituent principles, and then apply these to the many important questions which will present themselves."

The Chicago "Advance" is a little more explicit in being inexplicit. In 1879 it said: —

"The 'Savoy Confession,' whatever its 'historical' value, for 'substance of doctrine,' is not any fitting symbol or expression of the now existing Congregational belief and mode of statement. Any pretence that it is is not ingenuous, nor is the perpetuation of such a quasi-claim 'profitable either for doctrine or instruction in righteousness.' Probably few, if any, of our churches have in their Confessions of Faith adopted without modification any of the old creed statements."

In 1880 the author of this book made a most strenuous endeavor by correspondence and personal application, in Chicago and elsewhere, to obtain an authoritative answer to the question, What is Congregationalism? No one of that church to whom he applied could answer the question. In June, of that year, Rev. H. M. Case, of Oneida, Ill., detailed his troubles in the "Advance." "Born and bred a Congregationalist," he says, "I have from a child been at a loss to know what were its doctrines." He tried his own hand at making a creed, but never found the Congregationalist who could tell him if he had hit the nail on the head. He gathered everything he could hear of, but was further than ever from the point. He wrote to the Boston headquarters, and received this reply: "We have nothing that you mention. Those old creeds are out of print, and cannot be had at any price. We send the 'Boston Platform,' and have forwarded an order to Philadelphia for the 'Westminster Catechism,' which will be sent you

from there." On receiving and reading the "Boston Platform" he writes: "My perusal of the 'Boston Platform' only increased the aforesaid mental despondency and irritation, for it was but another treatise on the wearisome and endless matter of polity."

He then wrote to a great professor in a leading theological seminary, who answered: "I have asked the members of our faculty to aid me in finding the creeds for which you are searching;" and meanwhile the faculty had unearthed a book entitled, "Congregational Order, The Ancient Platform of the Congregational Churches of New England, with a Digest of the Rules and Usages in Connecticut," and the professor wrote: "We shall be glad to open our library to you to consult this volume or any others."

Mr. Case thus chronicles his last experience in his search:—

"Meanwhile I found at the post-office the other day two large and weighty packages, carefully wrapped and securely tied. I carried them to my study, eagerly cut the string and removed the wrapping, when lo! there lay on my carpet six beautiful volumes bound in leather, whose titlepages are identical and read thus: 'The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Containing the Confession of Faith, the Catechism, and the Directory for the Worship of God, together with the Plan of Government and Discipline, as ratified by the General Assembly at their sessions in May, 1821, and amended in 1833.'"

"I am still seeking, though with daily diminishing hopefulness, to know what an honest Congregationalist is expected to believe 'for substance of doctrine.'"

And the editor of the "Advance" confesses : —

"Account for it as each one may, the fact remains that as Congregational churches we have no generally acceptable popular outline of doctrinal instruction."

Every change in the views of Congregationalists is toward Universalist sentiments, notwithstanding the frantic efforts of some of their leading theologians to avoid our conclusions ; and their constant approach toward a broader faith is a confession of judgment to the assimilating power of our form of doctrine.

During a year's residence in Great Britain, the author of this volume ascertained that the pulpits of that country had largely abandoned preaching endless punishment, multitudes of them openly repudiating it. This is true of most Episcopal and Congregational, and many Wesleyan churches. Even the Presbyterian pulpits are in many instances extinct volcanoes, and some of them avow the larger hope in everything but name. Principal Caird, Fergus Ferguson, Dr. Joseph Leckie, Dr. Walter C. Smith, and others, avow principles that will one day lead their church to the true fold. Says the "Christian World" (Orthodox), Oct. 30, 1886 : —

"Quite a number of Wesleyan correspondents assure us that, however some of their ministers may preach 'eternal misery,' the old doctrine is only very partially preached, and scarcely ever in the bald, harsh form which people could bear in days of cruelty. Nearly all our correspondents rejoice that this is so."

And think of the fate of a Presbyterian pastor who should have published these lines fifty years ago. They were written by Rev. Walter C. Smith, D. D., of Edinburgh, United Presbyterian.

“ There came a soul to the gate of heaven,
 Gliding slow, —
 A soul that was ransomed and forgiven,
 And white as snow, —
 And the angels all were silent.

“ ‘ But I may not enter there,’ she said,
 ‘ For I must go
 Across the gulf, where the guilty dead,
 Lie in their woe: ’
 And the angels all were silent.

“ ‘ I had a brother, and also another
 Whom I loved well ;
 What if, in anguish, they curse each other
 In depths of hell ? ’
 And the angels all were silent.

“ ‘ How love the loved who are sorrowing,
 And yet be glad?
 How sing the songs ye are fain to sing,
 While I am sad ? ’
 And the angels all were silent.

“ ‘ Should I be liker Christ, were I
 To love no more
 The loved, who in their anguish lie
 Outside the door ? ’
 And the angels all were silent.

“The Lord himself stood by the gate,
And heard her speak
Those tender words, compassionate,
Gentle and meek:
And the angels all were silent.

“And he said, ‘Now will I go with you,
Dear child of love,
I am weary of all this glory too,
In heaven above ;’
And the angels all were silent.

“‘We will go seek and save the lost,
If they will hear,
They who are worst but need me most,
And all are dear.’
And the angels all were silent.”

Surely the world has progressed when such a poem can be published by a Scotch Presbyterian clergyman in Edinburgh, and not taint his reputation for Orthodoxy, nor impair his influence.

The author personally sent a large number of Universalist volumes to clergymen and theological professors in different parts of Scotland, in 1886-7, and the unexpected liberality of the recipients in their letters of acknowledgment was a source of great gratification, and illustrates the leading thought of this book. They wrote in acknowledging the receipt of the books such sentences as these :—

“With whose arguments and conclusions I have a hearty concurrence.” “The whole subject of the future life is being looked at from a different standpoint than formerly, even in Orthodox-

Calvinistic Scotland." "The controversy about the word ['everlasting'] has been some time ended for the thoughtful." "The one answer to the question of eternal punishment will be found in the fact that it would be out of proportion to finite transgression." "You seem to me to prove your point conclusively." "How much is there implied in that word of the Master, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.'" "We have only, I think, to agree as to what God is, to be obliged, by the purest necessities of thought, ultimately to agree as to all the rest." [Of Thayer's Theology] "My conclusions are in harmony with its main contention." "It will require a tremendous upheaval before even the ground lines in theology are laid as they ought to be. We want, in my opinion, purely scientific and philosophic thought brought into the whole region."

An entire volume might be filled with extracts from those identified with the principal denominations, expressive of the advancing and broadening sentiments of the churches. Those given in this volume are only a few of the large number that have accumulated on the hands of the author, and will serve as specimens of the general drift of thought, straws on the current of religious opinion. They are full of encouragement to those who cherish the faith once "everywhere spoken against," and point to the time when on the question of human destiny there shall be but one opinion,—that all the families of earth shall ultimately become "one family in heaven."

CHAPTER IX.

MORE EXPLICIT CONCESSIONS.

IT will be interesting to present in this place some of the remarkable concessions of our Partialist brethren. The Chicago "Advance" said as lately as 1883 : —

"We have an idea out this way that, if we can eliminate from our creeds the horrible doctrines which have come in from the Middle Ages, such as infant damnation, and indeed the damnation of almost all the race, according to the decrees of God, — that if we can only rid the church of some of these ancient and hoary heresies, we shall be in less danger of the new ; for the new is a direct product of the old."

The New York "Evangelist" confesses : —

"We have sincere sympathy with much of the inquiry and discussion now current respecting the theologies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with reference to their adaptation to the thoughts and needs of our time. We believe that it will be found to be a bootless task to attempt to bind the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in perpetual bondage to antique forms of thought and antiquated modes of stating divine truth. And so far as any new theology may arise, that will be in more obvious harmony with the spiritual demands of this inquiring, restless age ; so far as the theological thought of our time is endeavoring to attest the essential verities of grace in such struc-

ture and language that the popular mind can better understand and appreciate them, — we look upon it with favor, and pledge to it our support."

The New York "Church Union": —

"The Andover system, with its divine imperialism, governmental theory of the atonement, plenary ability of the will, and doctrine of sin and holiness, will take its place in the history of private speculations. An effort to prevent its fossilization is the real meaning of 'the Andover matter.' But it will go. Not even Mr. Joseph Cook can save it."

A daring clergyman of the Presbyterian Church sends a letter to the "New York Evangelist," in which he frankly announces his opinion that "our [their] Confession of Faith should be re-written or else we should have a new document which, prepared on a similar plan, shall be an explanation of our faith." He reiterates what Universalist journals have asserted for a half-century past, that some of the "statements in the Confession are repugnant to reason and to the word of God." The sooner the Presbyterian Church reaches this conclusion unanimously, the better for the world in general, and for the Presbyterian Church in particular.

The "Advance" remarks that Dr. Hodge has said: —

"To adopt every proposition contained in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms is more than the vast majority of our ministers either do or can do. To make them profess to do it is a great sin. It hurts their conscience. It fosters a spirit of evasion and subterfuge."

Why not, man-fashion, repudiate a creed thus disingenuously retained?

The "Christian Union" remarks:—

"The Presbyterian Church, as a church, requires no intellectual beliefs or opinions as a condition of lay membership. It requires acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith by its clergy and elders, but not by its laymen. Many Presbyterian churches have a shorter creed which candidates publicly accept; but many act on the principle announced by Dr. Hodge before the Evangelical Alliance, that no church has a right to make any conditions of admission to its fellowship which the New Testament has not declared to be conditions of admission to heaven."

This seems to be the modern Presbyterian policy; the preachers must say they retain the old faith, but the people may accept or reject. Who would have believed that Professor Patton, the prosecutor of Professor Swing, the *ne plus ultra* of Presbyterianism, in his annual sermon before the General Assembly, at Saratoga, 1879, actually declared that while a Presbyterian minister must accept "the standards," the laity may believe as much or as little of them as they please! In this way it is hoped that the faith may be kept sound, though nobody shall accept it but the clergy. How long will the pulpit preach "the standards" after the pews have abandoned them?

Two years later, in February, 1881, the "Interior," of Chicago, informed its readers that while the "Confession of Faith is a Calvinistic docu-

ment," there is "an unwritten law" which permits the minister to "preach a full and free salvation to all." The "Methodist," in view of this Janus-faced theology observes, "Calvinism is hunting with a double-barrelled gun, a college barrel and a pulpit barrel. The college barrel is loaded with Predestination, and the pulpit barrel is loaded with Free Salvation."

Rev. David Macrae, one of the best known ministers in Scotland, says, —

"The Westminster dogma of everlasting torment in itself is a subversion of God's character as revealed in Christ and amounts to a denial of the gospel. Carried to its issue, it robs God of his goodness, his mercy, and his justice. It robs him even of his sovereignty, giving sin a power of maintaining itself against him forever, and so far leaving the devil to all eternity master of the situation."

Dr. Arthur Crosby said : —

"He could not conceive of eternal punishment except on the basis of eternal sinning. If a soul does not sin eternally, it should not, and he believed, would not be punished eternally. He believed there are opportunities for sinning and repenting in the future life. He believed the salvation of Christ is offered freely to all. What the mode of punishment is to be, or how God will effect a reconciliation with sinning souls in the hereafter, he was not prepared to say."

Rev. Howard Crosby, D. D., says, —

"*Calvin* accepted all the contradictions of metaphysical Augustinianism, and made a scheme of divine sovereignty, at the expense of divine beauty and gospel grace."

The general drift among Presbyterians is exhibited in the subjoined extracts.

In the Annual Narrative "of the State of Religion within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," which was published by the order of the General Assembly, in 1878, occurs the following:—

"It is to be feared that some of our people have lost their love for and their faith *in the glorious old saving doctrines of the gospel as they are embodied in our Confession and Catechisms*; and so have lost all relish for them themselves, and all desire to teach them to their children."

The best portion of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland has for a long time been endeavoring to improve the standards of that church, especially the Westminster Confession. A "statement" was put forth, in 1878, which in its first article declares that free offer of salvation is made to every man, without distinction, on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice; in the second, that the doctrine of the divine decrees is to be held in harmony with the truth that "God will have all men to be saved," and with the "responsibility of men in dealing with the free and unrestricted offer of eternal life;" in the third, that man's inability is not of such a nature as to affect his responsibility, and that his depravity is not of such a nature as to prevent him from performing actions in any sense good; in the fourth, that those who accept the standards are not required

to hold that any infants are lost, or that all heathen must perish.

The learned Dr. Philip Schaff says:—

“Everybody must admit that the vast majority of mankind, no worse by nature than the rest, and without personal guilt, are born and grow up in heathen darkness, out of the reach of means of grace, and are thus, as far as we know, actually ‘passed by’ in this world. No Orthodox system can logically reconcile this stubborn and awful fact with the universal love and impartial justice of God.”¹

The Presbyterian Church retains the diabolical statements of doctrine on which it was originally founded. But it is difficult to find an intelligent minister or layman who does not discard the chief statements of the Westminster Confession. The New School looks with as much pity on the less advanced Old School as does the Old School to-day look back on its predecessors of thirty years ago. Still retaining the sheet anchor of error, it has nevertheless made great progress toward the liberal faith.

The most extraordinary evasions are practised by preachers and people who desire to preserve their church connections and still do not accept the cardinal principles on which their church is founded.

Even in Presbyterian Scotland, where Calvinism is served to the people with less admixture of Christian truth than elsewhere on earth, the divine leaven

¹ Creeds of Christendom, vol. i. p. 793.

is fermenting. The London "Christian World" (Evangelical) relates, in 1887:—

"Professor Candlish has been unsuccessful in convincing the Glasgow Free Presbytery that the time has arrived for bringing the subordinate standards of the church into harmony with the doctrines preached by ministers of the church; twenty-nine ministers and eight elders supported his motion, while twenty-seven ministers and thirteen elders voted with Principal Douglas, who moved the amendment. It is extraordinary that when such a question came up, not one-fourth of the elders and not one-half of the ministers who are members were present. Mr. Ross Taylor humorously said the Westminster Confession was an admirable statement for all time of the precise position of the church of Christ in this country two hundred and fifty years ago! Dr. A. A. Bonar told how he and his fellow-students had doubts and difficulties when at the hall, but they just went on 'plunging in the mire' till they reached firm ground and signed every word of the confession. Professor Lindsay held that he never signed the confession plain and simple; he signed it as 'approved by former assemblies of this church.' Dr. Adam strongly opposed the transmission of the overture, as did also Mr. Gault, another ministerial member of presbytery who has no charge. Mr. D. Gardiner, elder, asked the ministers to picture in their mind's eye their sessions, and to say, without laughing, whether these could stand an oral examination in the confession. His firm belief was that the subscription of it as a condition of holding office was a *sham*."

In December, 1887, the "New York Evangelist" (Presbyterian) said through a correspondent:—

"Is it not reasonable for a person to turn to the Confession of Faith to see what Presbyterians believe; and can we find fault with Ingersoll or any one else who brings this up against us? The Confession of Faith is a hindrance to the cause of Christ, and a stumbling-block to many a one. That so many are indo-

lent or indifferent enough to be ignorant of what it teaches does not alter the case. We ought not to be hampered by a Confession of a past generation teaching doctrines which we, basing our faith on God's Word, cannot believe."

How general, even among so rigid, and yet so kindly and intelligent a people as the Presbyterians, must not such a spirit of protest be found. And what a change in our direction has occurred to produce it, and tolerate its expression in an organ of that great branch of the Church.

Dr. Church, Dean of St. Paul's, remarks : —

"I should be disloyal to him whom I believe in and worship as the Lord of truth, if I doubted that honest seeking would at last find him. Even if it do not find him here, *man's destiny stops not at the grave, and many, we may be sure, will know him there, who did not know him here.*"¹

Rev. Brooke Lambert, Vicar of Greenwich, Eng., (in February, 1885) said : —

"As regards the attitude towards our fellow sinners, a great change of opinion is slowly making way. A larger hope is breathed, and that above a whisper, that God has room for more than we thought in his heart and home. It is opposed on the same ground as the admission of the Gentiles : 'What advantage then hath the Jews?' The truth is great, and what is truth will prevail. This hope, that Christ will gather together in one all the children of God scattered abroad, all who have a right to call God Father, must be held in connection with the mystery of the free will by which men so persistently shut themselves out, like Jerusalem of old, from what God would do for them. Yet God is stronger than evil. Yes, God is stronger than evil.

¹ Quoted by Farrar, *Eternal Hope*.

A simple truism it should seem to a Christian mind. Yet how many systems of divinity which have gained a wide acceptance in Christendom have been based upon the assumption that the very opposite of this is true, — namely, that evil is stronger than God."

Among many notable expressions, Archdeacon Farrar says : —

"If this awful doctrine is to be decided by texts, then the original language must be appealed to and interpreted in its proper and historical significance. Where would be the popular teachings about hell if we calmly and deliberately erased from our English Bibles the three words, 'damnation,' 'hell,' and 'everlasting'? Yet I say unhesitatingly — I say, claiming the fullest right to speak with the authority of knowledge, — I say with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility, — I say, standing here in the sight of God and my Saviour, and it may be, of the angels and the spirits of the dead, that not one of those words ought to stand any longer in our English Bibles; and that being, in our present acceptation of them, simply mistranslations, they most unquestionably will not stand in the Revised Version of the Bible if the revisers have understood their duty."

This, says an English newspaper, —

"is a candid and welcome, though tardy, admission. Humanity's instinct long ago arrived at this conclusion; enjoyment of it, however, has been interrupted only by the class to which the reverend speaker belongs. *Vox populi vox Dei* contains much truth."

The Episcopal Prayer-book compels every devout Episcopalian to pray for universal salvation : —

"That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men, we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord."

If the worshipper does not offer a sinful sacrifice, but prays "in faith, nothing doubting," he believes that his petition will be granted.

The Archbishop of Canterbury expresses —

"a hope that, after the day of judgment, God's mercy may, in the lapse of infinite ages, find some mode of restoring the lost, consistently with the maintenance of his purity and justice."¹

Rev. R. A. Holland, D. D., of New Orleans, has uttered most eloquent testimony. He says : —

"God's children are we all, rich and poor, wise and unwise, — the tempted who have proved themselves strong, and tempted who have fallen. Wayward though we may be, God loves us still ; wanderers into evil lands, he keeps the door of his home wide open for our returning footsteps. Sometime, I know not the day nor the hour, but sometime, because Christ was born, there is to be a great and last Christmas, when all of his scattered ones shall meet in the Father's house and keep high and unending festival."

Rev. R. Heber Newton, D. D. : —

"The doctrine that 'God is love' was so eloquently preached that the theologians reconsidered the doctrines of retribution. Even the Episcopal Church, in recently reviewing the Articles, struck out the one about eternal punishment. *When Universalism began its mission, religion, so to speak, had become ossified and rigid ;* and it was necessary, to meet the advanced thought of the age, that some change be made in it. The force that wrought this change developed outside of the church, and it has been instrumental in banishing much of the barbarism and cruelty of expression which Christians borrowed from the pagans."

¹ Word of God and the Ground of Faith.

The "open" question is growing more and more open in this church. It is doubtful whether many of its communion, outside of a few mere theologians and "here and there a traveller" among its laymen, accept the doctrine of unending torment in any form. It is certainly very rarely preached by its more prominent and eminent clergy.

During 1885, many "straws" indicated the direction of the theological winds. The Presbyterians, by the Westminster Confession of Faith, are logically committed to the salvation of "elect infants" only. Infants of the other class are not mentioned. The "Evangelist" endeavored to have the words, "Elect infants dying in infancy are saved," expunged from the Confession of Faith. It admitted by implication that non-elect infants are not saved, which it says no one now believes. In confessions of faith it holds there should be honesty and truth.

In Chicago, Rev. Mr. Bland, in 1885, read a paper before the Methodist Ministerial Association, in which he said: —

"We [that is, the Methodist denomination] are *drifting in'o virtual Universalism*. Our standard of theology at Evanston Garrett Biblical Institute is so lame in its theodicy that any student who has any Universalistic proclivities would be confirmed after embracing the teaching there given."

Look at the evidences of growth on several points during a generation. Leaving an aggressive atti-

tude, insisting on the old creeds, and eagerly rushing forward to assert them, the sacrificial churches are now become timid, apologetic, — still retaining the ancient horrors “as matter of record,” but rarely announcing, and almost never defending them. For example, the Boston “Congregationalist,” in 1880, declared that “Orthodoxy disowns a hell of material fire and brimstone,” “a literal lake of fire,” “a vast and burning prison,” “a material hell of worm and flame,” which it says, “fancy has attributed to Orthodoxy.” And yet, the literature of Orthodoxy up to a very recent date, is full of descriptions of these very things as realities. In fact not only did Jonathan Edwards say, —

“The world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, — a vast ocean of fire, in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed, vast waves or billows of fire continually rolling over their heads . . . their heads, their eyes, their tongues, their feet, their loins, and their vitals shall forever be full of a glowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements,” —

but even the living Spurgeon tells the sinner substantially the same. See pages 38 and 39 of this volume. Multitudes of similar passages might be cited from representative authors, decreasing in number with each succeeding year, let us thankfully record. Indeed, nothing is more indicative of progress — of the approach of the sacrificial churches toward our own — than the decrease in number of those

horrible declarations, once the general rule, now only the phenomenal exception.

Once sin was held to be infinite in its nature, and the smallest sin was said to deserve endless damnation; in the words of the Westminster Confession (chap. xv. art. 4), "There is no sin so small but it deserves damnation." Now the doctrine is that the sinner will be punished forever because he will sin forever.

The second of the Articles of Religion found in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church speaks of Jesus as one "who truly suffered and was crucified, dead, and buried, *to reconcile his Father to us*, and to be a sacrifice, not only for *original guilt*, but also for the actual sins of men."

This strange language is contained in an edition before us, printed in 1884. Almost universally the same church and its "evangelical" associates regard Jesus as the effect and proof of God's love for the sinner, and not the cause of it, and yet the old error is still printed, as if to show how far the church has departed from its alleged standards.

The heathen were till very lately regarded as lost, utterly; but the "Andover Review," for October, 1885, in an assault upon the theology of the time when the American Board came into existence, writes, "The intelligence and heart of the Christian Church not merely decline to accept the old dogma of the perdition of the heathen,—they repudiate it."

Take the progress on the subject of Infant Damnation. No one can be found to advocate this worse than heathen dogma, and in some quarters it is even denied that the horrible idea was ever taught.

In fact the contrast between the present and the very recent past is as dawn to midnight, as spring to winter. The "leaven" our church has cast into Christendom, has already produced such changes as unmistakably prophesy the coming day when "the whole shall be leavened."

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes gives the final word of the poet, and shows the power of the truth in reflecting its light from centre to centre of theological learning: —

Caught by a spark and fanned by every gale,
A brighter radiance gilds the roof of Yale ;
Amherst and Williams bid their flambeaus shine,
And Bowdoin answers through her groves of pine ;
O'er Princeton's sands the far reflections steal
Where mighty Edwards stamped his iron heel :
Nay, on the hill where old beliefs were bound
Fast as if Styx had girt them nine times round,
Bursts such a light that trembling souls inquire
If the whole church of Calvin is on fire ;
Well may they ask ; for what so brightly burns
As a dry creed that nothing ever learns ?

CHAPTER X.

POST-MORTEM PROBATION.

THE subject of post-mortem probation is attracting great attention among Christians, in all the divisions of the Partialist church. The wonderful parables of our Lord teach that the Heavenly Seeker will continue his search after the lost silver, the wandering sheep, the wayward prodigal, "until he find it." Therefore God's love for the soul, and human obligation and ability to return to God can never cease, and when the "uttermost farthing" shall be paid, the prison-doors of sin will open, and the sinner emerge. These once powerfully influential facts have been lost sight of for centuries, until recently revived.

Anciently the idea that Christ's labors extend into the future state was universally held, but for the last few centuries it has been lost sight of, except that the Catholic church has preserved a semblance of the great truth in its doctrine of Purgatory.

On 1 Pet. iii. 18-20, Dean Alford says our Lord "did preach salvation in fact to the disembodied spirits." Tayler Lewis says: "There was a work of Christ in hades; he makes proclamation

in hades to those who are there in ward. This interpretation was almost universally adopted by the early Christian Church." Professor Huidekoper says: "In the second and third centuries every branch and division of Christians believed that Christ preached to the departed." Dietelmair says, "This doctrine was believed in every Christian church," Dr. John H. Kurtz, in his "Manual of Sacred History," approved by the "New York Evangelist," "Evangelical Review," and Andover "Bibliotheca Sacra," after commenting on Romans x. 13, etc., and 1 Peter iii. 19, 20, says: "It seems to follow necessarily that the gospel will yet be preached in hades to those who without any fault of their own obtained no knowledge of Christ in this world."

Long overlooked, this great truth is rapidly asserting itself, as the saving clause of the Divine character, and is now a very prominent question among the so-called Evangelical churches.

Several professors at Andover, Mass., the location of the Theological School of the Congregationalists, affirm the necessity of *post-mortem* probation, and an action has been brought against them in the theological courts, the indictment in which contains the following counts. See the creed of this institution on page 13. They are accused of teaching—

"That there is and will be probation for all men who do not decisively reject Christ during the earthly life, and that this

should be emphasized, made influential and even central in systematic theology.

"That there is a 'new theology better than the old,' which, we apprehend, is not in harmony with the creed, but fatally opposed to the same.

"That the said creed teaches that orthodox and consistent Calvinism, that some of the professors apparently have no belief in, such as the following, which says: —

"'I believe . . . that the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and so immediately pass into glory; that their bodies being still united to Christ will at the resurrection be raised up in glory, and that the saints will be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity; but that the wicked will awake to shame and everlasting contempt, and with devils be plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever.'"

One must sympathize with the humane views of the indicted professors, though it is not easy to endorse their course in teaching sentiments contrary to those they were employed to inculcate. Their theology is better than their morality.

Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth, one of the advocates of the new movement says: —

"I believe that the end of probation for the individual is not, and from the nature of moral freedom cannot be, any outward circumstance, temporal accident, or physical change, like the death of the body."

And the "Christian Union" adds: —

"The current doubt upon this subject grows out of a change in conception respecting the character of God. The world is coming less and less to look upon him, as the old theology did, as a King or Moral Governor, and more and more, as Christ

did, as a Father; and it is difficult, not to say impossible, to make moderns believe that a heavenly Father can consent to leave any child of his to wander off into the night of eternal sin and estrangement, so long as any measures which infinite love can devise are left untried to bring him back again to his Father's love. To assert that God has in this life, for all his lost children, exhausted the resources of Divine pity is to contradict the plain appearances of life."

In the same line Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, D. D., formerly missionary to Turkey, expresses his views very freely in the October (1886) number of the "*Bibliotheca Sacra*." One page of his article is unconsciously devoted to showing the superiority of the Moslem view of the future state to that taught by the Orthodox Christian theology.

"All Asia [he says] believes in a continuance of man's probation without any definite time-limit, like death. This is evident from the universal prevalence of prayers for the dead. About fifteen millions of petitions are offered to Allah for them every day. . . . All believe in a state after death, not fixed and irrevocable, but admitting of alleviation and final deliverance."

The charity and mercy of the Moslem system stand in strong contrast to the inhumanity and injustice of popular theology.

Rev. J. W. Brier, an aged Presbyterian clergyman, writes to the "*Church Union*": —

"It requires no argument to prove that the great mass of men and women who die have not reached that fixedness of character that makes their redemption from perpetual and everlasting rebellion against God either an impossible or an improbable thing. We see hardened men persist in open rebellion

against God for threescore and ten years, and after all they are converted. Does physical death so change the laws of mind, and so weaken the appliances of mercy, that comparatively tender and innocent boys and girls cannot be saved hereafter when their circumstances may be far more favorable to the work of grace? Joseph Cook's prestige as a great thinker may force his theories without proof down the throats of prejudiced and credulous people, but there are men outside of Boston who require something more than his assertions."

The American Board of Missions has resolved not to send missionaries into the foreign field who accept the new-school theology. This action produced intense feeling at Andover, and the new-school leaders determined to test conclusions at an adjourned meeting of the Board at Des Moines. But by a majority of forty-eight to twenty-two the Board "distinctly and emphatically" disavowed its belief in the doctrine of a future probation, and instructed its prudential committee to exercise great care on this point in the selection of missionaries. Of eighty members absent, seventy sent letters condemning the new theology; and Dr. Egbert Smyth, the head of the new school, was put off the prudential committee by seventy to thirteen votes. The only point carried by the new-school men at Des Moines was a resolution asking the Board to consider the expediency of referring "difficult applications" to a council of the churches.

The number, learning, and prominence of those who are endeavoring to smooth the wrinkled front

of Orthodoxy is a refreshing and encouraging sign of the times. One of them, Rev. Mr. Hume, a missionary, has been sent back to his field of labor notwithstanding he said at a meeting :—

“I know I have gone home with a heavy heart, and often dim eyes, because the gospel of love and mercy which I was seeking to give to these men was followed by a feeling of bitterness in their hearts, because they thought that it implied an eternity of sorrow for their ancestors.”

By a vote of seven to three in the committee his departure was postponed. The “Andover Review” cannot restrain its indignation, and concludes its article as follows :—

“The common sense of average Christian men will get at the heart of this matter. It is known that the most urgent appeals have been made for men, but that when men have offered themselves, and it is certain that others like them are ready to follow, they have been rejected. It is not feared that they will preach a vitiated gospel, or will corrupt the heathen, or will be lacking in diligence and earnestness. In a word, they are not able to affirm that millions of the heathen will be condemned forever without having had any knowledge of redemption through the Saviour of mankind.”

It seems that missionaries who have been taught the spirit of the gospel and the humanitarian tendencies of the age, are ashamed to tell the heathen that their ancestors are suffering in a fearful and hopeless hell.

Rev. F. H. Thayer, after having uttered the subjoined words, was pronounced orthodox, and installed

as pastor of a Congregational church in Quincy, Illinois : —

“These principles imply that if there be those in pagan lands, living without the light of the gospel, who have not had a moral probation, or those in Christian lands, dying at any period of life, from infancy to age, without an adequate moral probation, such probation will be granted them. While we cannot and do not dogmatically assert from Scripture that there is a future probation, it is reasonable to suppose from the fact of Christ's mission, and its universal bearing, that although the obdurately wicked of heathen lands, as well as of Christian lands, are without excuse, those who are feeling after God, if happily they may find him, will have the Christ presented to them. Every human being will have a moral probation. The implication seems fair to be this. I expect it will be so. The Scripture does not teach the contrary. It does not forbid the expectation.”

So that it is orthodox to believe in post mortem probation.

The “ Christian World ” (London) says : —

“ It does not chime in with our notion of Congregational principles to exclude a successful worker from the mission field simply because he holds a doctrine which is maintained by some of the most acute Biblical critics of the day, and as to the truth or otherwise of which no one can positively affirm or deny until all truth is revealed beyond the grave.”

The “ World ” continues : —

“ A theology of good news rather than of threatening and terror has almost universally taken possession of the English pulpit. But, as we have often pointed out, many of the churches of America have a long way to go to be as free as we happily have become in the Old Country. Even the Congregationalists, the freest of most of them, are in bonds to many

exploded notions formed in dark times, and are curiously hugging the chains. "The Andover Review," and the professors of the college of that name, and the men they are putting into the churches, are so enlightening the public mind as to alarm the defenders of President Edwards's dreadful doctrines, that an open conflict has now come about between the two schools. . . . Apart from all considerations bearing on the case of the Andover professors, it is desirable that dogmas which impeach the justice and love of God should be permitted to become obsolete, and should leave the mysteries of the future to be suffused with the light of Christian hope."

Nothing is more apparent than that the grave will not much longer be regarded as a great gulf, across which even Omnipotent love cannot pass; that God will not be charged with having made a dead line to limit illimitable mercy. Christians of all churches are rapidly coming to see that in all the vicissitudes of that immortal existence which God has bestowed on his children, hereafter as here, he will be as willing to receive man as man can be anxious to return to allegiance; that the door of mercy will never close between God and man. In fact the next great step of progress that will be made by the sacrificial churches will be taken by the main body, which will inevitably follow the advance guard now insisting on the possibility of post-mortem probation.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCESSIONS TO THE CHARACTER OF UNIVERSALISM AND ITS ADVOCATES.

THE concessions of the advocates of so-called Orthodoxy, to the character of those who accept the broader and brighter faith, and the influence of that faith on its advocates, is remarkably illustrated in the general praise bestowed upon Origen, the great saint and scholar, one of the most eminent of all the Christian fathers, who was the most prominent ancient advocate of universal salvation after the apostles. We give a few of the many testimonials that might be cited : —

“ A man of almost divine endowments.” ¹

“ The greatest master of the church after the apostles.” ²

“ Certainly if any man deserves to stand first in the catalogue of saints and martyrs, and to be annually held up as an example to Christians, this is the man.” ³

“ I had rather be with Origen wherever he is, than with Justinian and Theodora wherever they are.” ⁴

“ His whole life was one unbroken prayer.” ⁵

¹ Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, Panegyric of Origen.

² Saint Jerome, *Præf. in Quest. in Gen.*

³ Mosheim.

⁴ F. D. Maurice.

⁵ Canon Westcott.

"We know of no man in the whole Christian era, except Saint Paul, who labored so incessantly, and rendered to the Church such inestimable services."¹

"The condemnation of Origen was a death-blow to theological science in the Greek Church, and left it to stiffen gradually into a mechanical traditionalism and formalism."²

Nor was he exceptional: —

"The more profoundly learned any one was in Christian antiquity, so much the more did he cherish and defend the hope that the sufferings of the wicked would at some time come to an end. (*Quanto quis altius eruditione in antiquitate Christiana eminuit, tanto magis, spem finiendorum olim cruciatum aluit atque defendit.*)"³

Candid observers echo this sentiment of modern accepters of the doctrine. Occasionally, a belated and benighted critic repeats the thought of one of the American Tract Society's publications which says:

"If the doctrine of Universalism should become general human society could not exist. Like atheism, to which it is near kin, its malignant tendency is not fully seen while society at large is under the influence of a contrary belief."

But the best men who do not agree with us entirely disagree with the writer of the preceding paragraph.

Of Thomas Erskine, of Linlathen, the sainted Scotch Universalist, Principal Shairp, who did not accept his views, said: —

"No man I ever knew had a deeper sense of the exceeding evil of sin, and of the Divine necessity that sin must be always

¹ Farrar, "Mercy and Judgment," p. 307.

² Prof. P. Schaff.

³ Doederlein, "Theology," § 223, Obs. 8.

misery. His universalistic views did not in any way relax his profound sense of God's abhorrence of sin."

And one correspondent wrote to him : —

"Everything in you reminds me of God."

Rev. Mr. Jackson, once a Baptist, then a Universalist, and afterwards a Baptist, says in his "Man of Sorrows" (pp. 406, 407) : —

"To speak of them as I have found them, I must say that, for good morals, acts of kindness, sociability, benevolence, and hospitality, I have never seen them excelled; nor was I ever united with any body of ministers who treated me with so much kindness as they. And believe me, my reader, their kindness has caused me more uneasiness than their wickedness. For when I contrasted their kindness to me with the cruel treatment I everywhere met with from some ministers of other denominations, and recollected that Christ had said, 'By their fruits shall ye know them,' I became bewildered, and had my mind perpetually on the rack, not knowing how to account for such strange inconsistencies! And the only conclusion I could arrive at was, the Universalist ministers were wrong in theory but right in practice, while those alluded to of other denominations were right in theory but wrong in practice. Nor have I seen any cause as yet to depart from that conclusion."

Some very positive concessions as to the work and character of modern Universalism and Universalists may be given here. "Zion's Herald" (Methodist) in February, 1870, said : —

"This organism exists. It is respectable in numbers, wealth, and position. It has a literature of its own, that is strong in the defence of its peculiar views. *It is, as a whole, more faithful to the leading moral questions of the age than some more orthodox and heterodox sects.* It has a true and steadfast word for Temperance and Prohibition, — no body surpassing, but few

equalling it in zeal for this first of humanitarian causes. It is quick to recognize the liberty of woman, in some paths of this liberty outrunning all rival bodies. It will not speedily die. It is entrenching itself to stay. Clinging to its idea of a church far more closely than its kindred sect the Unitarians, much nearer the people in its origin and instincts, holding fast to the Bible as the ground of its belief, however strange may be its interpretation thereof, it has, for these reasons, a longer life than those may desire who have contended against it so steadily and victoriously."

The Boston "Olive Branch" (Methodist) once said: —

"We should be happy to see what we think erroneous in the creed of Universalists refuted and put down, but we never will be a party to an attack on the morals and characters of a class of men who, as far as we know, stand as high on these points as any of their more orthodox neighbors."

Among the most remarkable statements on the subject yet given by any opponent, — notable for equal candor and truthfulness, — is that of Rev. Dr. W. W. Patton before the Chicago Theological School. Note that he accredits our church with having redeemed the theology of Christendom from absolute falsehood. He says: —

"1. Universalism has served to correct wrong interpretations of Scripture. 2. Universalism has righted us up in the abstract arguments from reason. 3. *Universalism has put a check upon a heartless representation of Divine severity.* 4. Universalism has aided to keep up the idea of retribution in this world. 5. Universalism has prevented a too conclusive reliance upon future punishment as a motive to the Christian life. 6. Universalism has corrected certain views as to the extent of the atonement."

Rev. Robert West, late editor of the "Advance," once remarked in a letter to that journal, October, 1878, —

"Between Calvinism, as taught by its founder in his famous 'Institutes,' and Universalism, if I were compelled to embrace either, I should without hesitation choose the latter."

At another time Mr. West quoted the following from the "Chicago Evening Journal," with that "silence that gives consent : " —

"The truth is, we take it, that, Scripturally, the doctrine of the eternity of punishment is almost beyond question ; but as a mere matter of reason, leaving the Scriptures out of account, the anti-hell champions have the advantage."

The editor of one of the Methodist "Advocates," in February, 1878, delivered the following trilemma :

"Calvinism is a scheme of limited mercy and of unlimited exercise of power on God's part.

"Methodism is a scheme of unlimited mercy and of limited exercise of power.

"Universalism is a scheme of unlimited mercy and of unlimited exercise of power."

This concession "gives away" the theology of its author.

The Rev. John Leland, a once well-known Baptist minister, was in the company of a number of his brethren, when one of them asked him what he thought of Universalism, — hoping for a word of disapprobation. Mr. Leland answered : —

"When I feel most deeply the love of God and the highest communion with my Saviour, I pray most fervently that others

may enjoy the same blessing. Nor can I think of friend or foe, acquaintance or stranger, at home or abroad, among all the nations of the earth, without sincerely praying that they may be brought to the joy unspeakable and full of glory which love of God gives me. Now, if so small a portion of love as my poor heart can contain produces such desires, what must all the fullness of God do?" and he turned his back and left the circle.

The Swedenborgian author of "*Footprints of the Saviour*," Rev. Julian K. Smythe, remarks on page 194 of his excellent work:—

"It is not necessary to think of Divine wrath as standing over against the moral baseness of the world. It is not necessary to think of Christ as a separate person from God, trying by means of prayers and the sight of his wounds to intercept the Divine judgments, trying to make the Infinite One more merciful than he is, as though he had not a heart to pity the sins and miseries of a groaning world! Nowhere in the Scriptures shall we find that such a mediator is necessary. John in his old age looked with open vision upon the bright scenery of heaven. He saw no monarch sitting on a throne with lowering brow; nothing to tell of Divine wrath; but, as if to prove to him the constancy and tenderness of the Divine love, though wounded by men, denials, and sins, he saw in the very midst of the throne,—what? The stern Deity of our theologies? No! He saw in the midst of that throne 'a Lamb as if it had been slain;' as if, says one, 'there was not in Palestine a Calvary alone, but away in the heart of God, where we crucify him by our disobedience every day.' What we need, then, is not an intercessor, in the sense that God needs interceding, and as if, unless some one step in between us and the Divine Judge, our cause is lost. What we do need, and what we have, is a medium, a channel between the infinite perfections of God and the vileness of man, such as will transmit the life of the former into the weakness and sicknesses of the latter,—that God and man may not dwell apart, but be brought at one; man lifted up by repentance, to abide in the

wisdom and love of the Lord ; the Lord living in the cleansed heart of the man. 'And I (the Lord said) if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' That was the true atonement, — the Lord glorifying his humanity with the very divine love or fatherhood of his nature, and then raising men up into conjunction with himself."

The late Professor Diman, of Brown University, was an outspoken advocate of the coming faith of his church. In his memoirs, Professor George P. Fisher, of the same college, quotes his words, and neither dissents nor condemns the position of Professor Diman. Once this departure would have been suppressed, or condemned with holy horror.

Rev. Dr. Webber, of Troy, New York (Presbyterian), remarks : —

"The hope of ultimate universal restoration has been held in all ages of the church, unless we except the apostolic. It is being pushed to the front now, as the final answer to this question [Are there few that be saved?]. Universalists have changed largely in their views of late, and are disposed, as far as I know, to abandon the crude notion of purification in the article of death — as if there were any magical influence in the dissolution of the body to cleanse the soul and translate it spotless to heaven, no matter what the life may here have been — for the doctrine of future punishment which shall issue, sooner or later, in the restoration of all mankind. There is much to be said in favor of this belief from a rational point of view. While it may often have its ground in a perverted moral sense, *it has found a deep root in the noblest and most evangelical Christians*. It seems to honor the Deity, his power, wisdom, and grace. It is an expression of a heartfelt desire, always strongest in the best, for the complete triumph of good over evil ; for the full deliverance and perfect harmony of the groaning creation. . . .

"It is believed by many that this was the hope of the apostle Paul, many passages of whose letters look with earnest expectation in this direction. It may be further said that the sentiment of humanity, which Christ's spirit has inspired, revolts from the doctrine of the eternity of hell, and would fain 'trust the larger hope.' Such hope of the feelings is worthy of respect. *The mighty Yes of the heart is sometimes stronger than the No of the head*; shall I say truer? I pity the Christian whose heart never faltered and drew back from acceptance of a doctrine which carries with it such terrible views of the destiny of men."

But more remarkable still is the concession of President Northrup, formerly a professor in Yale, but now President of the University of Minnesota. He is a Congregationalist, but not a clergyman. He says:—

"And twenty-five years ago there was an awful amount of meaning in that word 'eternity.'"

"Exactly how it is now in regard to this matter I do not undertake to say. I think it cannot be doubted that the change of feeling is great. Most people remember very distinctly that the 'mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.' Whether their memory extends any farther does not clearly appear. But that there is a very general willingness to trust the case of everybody to the mercy of the Lord, and an absence of any serious and troublesome apprehension as to the eternal destiny of those who have died without any special evidence of faith in Christ, cannot, I think, be doubted.

"One cause of this comfortable feeling of Christians respecting the fate of those who die out of Christ is, I think, the change of view respecting the character of the punishment inflicted in the next world. The lurid images of the past no longer represent the fate and suffering of the lost. The Lord is not expected to interfere very much with the natural workings of causes; and thus the soul is expected to go on in the next world in the direction in which it was headed when it left

this world. If it was not a very immoral and unclean soul, it is supposed that it would not suffer very badly in the next world ; and in any event, having gotten rid of the horror which used to be associated with future punishment, the church is very comfortable in leaving the details of that punishment to God, — certain that he will do what is right, — and very hopeful that the results will not be so bad for the impenitent man as has been feared. From all this it appears that *the church has made a general movement in the direction of modified Universalism*. Many people in the church will doubtless be unwilling to admit this. But it is so. Pastors in their inner consciousness know it to be so. The people in the pews know it to be so. It is not necessary for the pulpit to tell the pews anything about it. Both have been swept away by this quiet movement. The relation of pulpit and pew to each other is practically unchanged, but both have gone from their former anchorage and are slowly drifting. They will land together ultimately, but exactly where no one can tell. The peculiar thing about the whole matter, as it seems to me, is that it has all come about without any special effort on anybody's part to bring it about. The pulpit has not preached it to the pews. The pews have not forced it on the pulpit. *There has been a movement of thought in a certain direction which has swept along both pulpit and pews*. Engrossed in this movement of thought, the pulpits have ceased to speak of some things that were formerly especially prominent ; and the conscious and intelligent pews have recognized in the absence of certain doctrines from the pulpit a sympathy between the pulpit and the pews in reference to those doctrines. And so, apparently without consultation, and certainly without any proclamation, there is a general consent that *certain doctrines once held to be true and of vital importance, are to be regarded so no longer.*"

The "Christian Union" of January 13, 1887, publishes a sermon preached by Rev. G. A. Gordon, pastor of the "Old South Church," Boston, from which these words are quoted :—

"I am not a Universalist. The Universalist affirms the salvation of all men. I make no such affirmation. Nevertheless, I am as certain as I am of my own existence that, were the salvation of all men absolutely assured, it would never cut the nerve of missions in any mind with a spark of the love of God in it. I might go further. I might contend that if we could believe in the salvation of all men, it would add fresh incentive to the heart of every lover of righteousness the world over. If it were certain that God would finally wipe from his universe every stain of sin, reclaim every soul, make the rhythm of his love flow through all hearts, and cause all the sons of God to sing at the consummation of all things, as the morning stars sang together at the beginning; if it were certain that He should at last look forth upon a restored universal order, as He did in the dawn of creation, and pronounce it altogether fair and good, — every man's zeal whose zeal is for righteousness would thereby gain immeasurably. The ultimate goal would be so grand as almost to create a soul under the ribs of death. This consummation is so satisfying to the reason that pleads for unity and harmony in this whole system of things, to the conscience that would fain postulate the final ascendancy of moral law over the rational life of the universe, to the affection that would lay siege to hell in the hope that it might at last fall into the hands of holiness, to the will that would carry its sovereign purpose over the whole circle of being, that if we could be certain of it, it would add to the missionary motive incalculable strength. If I could, I would be a dogmatic Universalist. I should have so much more incentive to live for righteousness."

Quoting this language in the "Universalist," Rev. Dr. J. S. Cantwell eloquently says: —

"And coming from the pastor of the Old South Church, it shows the remarkable progress which is going on in the religious world, and fast overcoming the prejudices and enmities of the past in regard to the Universalist faith, and also the new light which is dawning on the Orthodox mind from the principles

long maintained and published by our church. Over and over again have Universalists held aloft the principle deduced from the spirit of the New Testament, that the supreme motive of religion and the basis of all true missionary zeal is founded in the Eternal Love, as that love is revealed in Christ; that the impulse of activity and devotion in Christian work is not communicated by belief in an eternal hell for the sinner; that efforts for the redemption of the world are not limited or in any way embarrassed by the belief in universal salvation; that Universalism, when properly conceived and applied, is a stimulus to all Christian activity and beneficence, and that believers in this faith found the faith helpful and inspiring in all directions of the spiritual life. Now comes one of the most distinguished Congregationalists of the country affirming, in almost so many words, this preaching of the Universalist faith, and emphasizing all our deliverances of a century! Surely the world moves nowadays, moves with rapid strides when the Old South Church responds with affirmations like these. What more could Mr. Gordon say of Universalism if he believed it, — were he what he is careful to say he is not, ‘a dogmatic Universalist’? It would be difficult for any advocate of the faith to give a more glowing testimony to its practical power over the heart, and the royal incentive which it brings to its believers, than is furnished in these remarkable words.”

It ought to be incredible that any human being would be less willing to labor in behalf of man and in the service of God, if he regarded his Maker as his loving Father and Saviour, and all men as joint-heirs with Christ, than when denying these divine truths. To say this of one’s self is to confess a mercenary selfishness that must exclude the soul from God’s kingdom until the bad spirit is exorcised.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

SUCH has been the rate of progress during the last century that it might be demonstrated mathematically that if the same ratio shall be continued for another century the doctrine of endless torment will be where that of infant damnation is to-day — repudiated by every intelligent Christian. When that day comes, and men shall rejoice over their emancipation, the doctrine of Universal Salvation will be elevated to its rightful place in the honor and esteem of mankind.

When John Murray landed in New Jersey, in 1770, the American church was a unit in cherishing the dogma of an endless hell, in its most frightful form. It was held to be a literal lake of fire and brimstone, to burn forever, and to contain the great majority of human souls, nine out of every ten at least, and sect vied with sect in extravagant efforts to describe the horrors of that heathen fable. But the new gospel was announced, its glad tidings were caught up by kindred souls, and the work of reform began. Gradually, as it seemed while the work was

going on, but with wonderful rapidity as we look back over the lapse of ten brief decades, the grim visage of error has softened ; the leaven of truth has permeated the world, until not a sect that was in existence when Murray landed in the New World, save the Roman Catholic, would to-day be recognized should one of the fathers of 1770 come out of his grave and listen to the current teachings of his own pulpits.

In 1805, only thirty-five years later, Rev. Hosea Ballou published his treatise of the Atonement. At that time the Christian Church in all its branches regarded Christ as an infinite victim slaughtered to appease infinite rage, a substitute for those who were to be saved ; that he received the suffering due the sinner. Ballou announced the moral view, that Christ was the effect and not the cause of God's love for sinners, — a theory that has proved so successful that not only is it substantially the view of Thomas, Swing, Bushnell, and the "New Orthodoxy" so-called, but it has so far modified the theories of all the Protestant sects that the old "butcher theory" is rarely or never preached, and is scarcely accepted even by those in whose creeds it still retains a place. No such revolution in theological opinion was ever created in the same length of time by any one man as Hosea Ballou has compelled in three-fourths of a century on the subject of Atonement. It was not till he used the phrase "the fatherhood of God and

the brotherhood of man," that the immortal sentence became current in literature, — a sentiment that is now heard in nearly all Christian churches.

The fact is, the Protestant Church, in all its Orthodox branches, is successfully endeavoring to slough the monstrous incubus of Latin error imposed on Christianity by Augustine, and is trying to return to the purity in which Christianity was held by Origen and Clement, — a purity derived from the original fountain. Professor Allen, in his "Continuity of Christian Thought," declares that the trend is away from the despotism and darkness of a Latinized Augustinianism, toward the purer and genuine form taught by Origen and Clement; in other words, that the modern progress is not toward anything new, but is a renaissance — is a return toward the ancient and original purity of Christianity as Jesus taught it. The best presentation of that gospel is the Universalistic theology.

Universalists should need no other encouragement to push forward the work of religious reform than the fact that they are armed with the truth. No matter how poor, how feeble, how opposed by numbers and worldly influence we may be, the truth we have will prove omnipotent against opposition, and will annihilate it. Luther lifts his voice against the wrong, and millions of voices respond. Murray speaks in God's behalf, and a century after, the errors of fifteen hundred years' growth are tottering

to their fall. Nominally held by thousands, they are apologetically retained, and though their old forms remain, their vitality has shrunk until they are the merest simulacra, hollow effigies of what they were. Sometimes dead bodies have been exhumed that seemed to have been untouched by decay. Every lineament of the remembered countenance was preserved; but a few moments of exposure to air proved that silent influences had long been at work, and had destroyed all the elastic foundations on which beauty had sustained its frail fabric, as the surface crumbled into unsightly corruption, and a horrible cadaver demonstrated that the work of decay had been complete. Such is the real condition of the great theological horror against which we war. A few more breaths of the nineteenth century, and men will everywhere turn with disgust from the dead body of a once living monstrosity.

Its proportions are yet formidable to the eye that observes only superficially. It reckons its adherents by millions. Its temples fill all countries. Its advocates run to and fro, and compass sea and land for proselytes. Numerically, materially, it is strong compared with ourselves. But after all, "they who are with us are more than they who are with them." We have allies. "The stars in their courses fought" of old against the wrong no more than now, and always. It is not a question of numbers that is involved. The realm of truth is no republic. A show

of hands does not decide. The right and true are always mightier than the wrong and false.

While our progress, numerically, has been wonderful, we are yet in the minority as a sect, but we have allies who are steadily flanking our opponents, have already, in fact, surrounded them, and are rapidly closing in upon them; and suddenly, as in a moment, the confederacy will be no more, as those who have upheld it accept the great principles of that gospel truth which maketh free indeed.

Look inside the sacrificial churches. What multitudes there have ripened into a more genial faith than that professed. They have utterly discarded the ancient error, and agree heartily with us. What multitudes, drawn by social considerations, or led thoughtlessly along, apply for admission to those churches, and, though entirely frank to say that they repudiate all that characterizes the ancient creeds, are gladly received. What hosts of clergymen scrupulously weed out all that smacks of "orthodoxy" from their pulpit communications, and preach from year to year ideas that are wholly at war with the doctrines which they nominally represent. Such membership, such preaching is steadily undermining the old Bastile. They are really foes to the camp they occupy. Unwittingly they are preparing the churches they sustain for the day when the errors on which they are built will not be tolerated.

Look at literature, already spoken of. What spirit

animates all the great books, all the works that are read? Who writes a great poem in the interest of Orthodoxy? If one were written, who would read it, except with disgust? The novels, the poems, the philosophy, the books that command readers, the literature of our age is Universalistic. The spirit of our faith flows like the unseen currents of the air into all hearts, and though the champions of error contend against the force of what they are pleased to call an unsanctified, an irreligious, an infidel literature, their efforts are vain. The melting power of modern literature is irresistible. In this drift-epoch of the church, as the icebergs of Orthodoxy, grounded, feel the mighty influence of the genial sun of truth, shining through the warm atmosphere of modern literature, they melt, and the future observer will only know that once they chilled the air of this age as the stranded débris is found, strewing the track of time; just as we in the temperate latitudes of our own land know that once our prairies and hills were covered with icebergs and glaciers, by the granite boulders and walrus-tusks and other remains that are scattered here and there. The world of literature is filled with our allies.

So of science. Not only every step of its progress has been contested by the prominent churches, but every discovery, every new development it makes, re-enforces the liberal phases of Christianity, and

CONCLUSION.

compels their opponents to recede more and more into the background.

So of art. Its tendency, like that of science, is to the universal. Partialism finds no endorsement in any work of modern art. The Dantesque horrors that once the brush of Michael Angelo produced are only prized for their artistic skill. They no longer represent realities, and the art of to-day struggles for a higher ideal. Its Christ is not a cadaverous dyspeptic; its saints do not represent the apotheosis of filth and rags and gloom; its heaven is no longer a narrow Pantheon, or its hell a material prison. It struggles toward the Christian ideal in time and eternity, a cheerful spirit here, and a universal home hereafter, presided over by the Universal Father.

But better still, we have an ally in every intellect, and in every heart. Human reason is with us. Every dictate of reason is against the errors we oppose. There are multitudes of reasoning men and women who retain the false dogmas in which they have been reared. That is, they reason on all subjects except religion, but professedly and from principle taboo the authority and office of this divine light where most of all it is needed. Reason is by them banished from asserting its sway where its voice should always be heard, for it is confessed that reason would repudiate the conclusions on which the sacrificial churches depend. Is not this a confession that we have a mighty *corps de reserve* in that reason

with which God has clothed all souls? Is it not an assurance that when its power shall be yielded to, as one day it will be, by all Christians, error will vanish before it, and our own ideas be universally accepted? Human affection is with us. Not that there are not millions of the tenderest hearts that yield assent to the doctrines we reject. But those hearts bleed and break while they accept. Every thought is a protest. Every pulsation is a pang of detestation. All the tender sympathies of human affection are in perfect accord with the teachings of our faith, and when, at a day not distant, those holy pleadings shall not be stifled, when they shall be, as they should be, listened to, the old creeds will shrivel like parchment in the flame, and the gospel of universal grace will find congenial soil in every heart. The intellect and the affection of man, his head and his heart, his reason and his sympathies are our allies, and are aiding us as we wage the great battle of truth.

When the prophet of old saw the forces of his enemies surrounding the city — outnumbering his own friends, and to the ordinary eye threatening their destruction, he was not intimidated, for as he raised his eyes he saw the air full of angelic forms fighting against his foes, and he cried out: “Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” As we see our allies, in the churches nominally arrayed against us, in literature, in art,

science, the movements of society, the reason and affection of humanity, in the very air we breathe, which is pulsating with invisible agencies at work in our behalf, — we find our eyes opened, and behold the “chariots and horsemen of God” flanking, surrounding our opponents, and we, too, can rejoice as we say with the prophet: “Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

It is related that a party of Captain Parry’s Arctic explorers once travelled weeks, and, as they supposed, hundreds of miles, on an immense ice-floe and unknown to themselves the floe had drifted southward, faster than they had travelled — as it seemed to them — northward, so that they were really much farther south at the end of their long and tedious tramp, than they were at the start. Thus the great theological ice-floe has been steadily floating toward more genial latitudes, even while its occupants have been facing, and as they thought going, in the opposite direction. The icy creeds have been dissolving in the warm Gulf Stream of progress, till the discerning eye can already see that it is a mere question of time when their last vestige shall disappear.

Or, to change the figure, — when Sir Christopher Wren began his preparations to rebuild St. Paul’s cathedral after the great fire in London, he found the stout walls of the old ruin very difficult to throw down. He bethought himself of the battering rams used by the ancients, and his workmen assaulted the

walls with blows given by huge beams. Blow after blow was given with no apparent effect, but at last the structure cracked, tottered, and fell. Then the great architect said: "The very first blow, and every subsequent blow, though it seemed to accomplish nothing, contributed just as much as the last, to the destruction of the wall." Let this thought encourage all those, however humble, who have ever struck a blow for the extirpation of error. Each has done something to accelerate the consummation of the destruction of the old and the erection of the new edifice now rising, and which they have helped to build, whether they have toiled at the foundations, or shall stand among the exultant multitudes who, as they see the headstone of the corner ascend to its destined place, shall shout "Grace, grace unto it!"

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